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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On the Thrill of the Kill

In "The 99th's Last Mission" (*Correspondence*, October 2002), Brian Kirkpatrick discusses his father's attitude toward service in World War II. I was born in 1920, a close contemporary of Dr. Kirkpatrick's father. I served in six major battles of World War II, from before the beginning until after the end, and while one man's experience cannot be representative of a group, I must say that Dr. Kirkpatrick seems to be talking about a different war. His father fought in Europe, whereas I served in the Pacific, and the 99th Division featured in the article was composed mainly of draftees, whereas my associates were U.S. Marines. While I do not discount these memoirs, they should not be taken as a measure of the attitudes of American servicemen in World War II.

In various reunions, my friends have often addressed the question of why men fight, and they have reached the conclusion that *men like to fight*. No one likes heat, cold, thirst, exhaustion, and pain, but when blows begin to be exchanged, the pervading emotion is one of exhilaration. None of my comrades, however, noticed any feeling of guilt.

In war, you kill because it is your duty but also, undeniably, because of the visceral thrill. I spent several days in a hospital bunk adjoining that of a very prominent Marine, who later retired as a three-star general. In those long, boring hours, he once told me that the thing that he enjoyed most in life was killing Japs. (That is the word he used.) His view was not unusual, and I am quite sure that vast numbers of young men who faced us in the Pacific felt the same way about killing *Gaijin*.

I do not mean to disparage Dr. Kirkpatrick or his father, but not all American fighting men are Ferdinands. It may well be that U.S. Marines are a different breed from civilian draftees. They may not be better fighters (though we would like to think so), but they certainly enjoy it more.

As we head into a really bad war now, America needs all the warriors she can get. Let us not pretend that they are an endangered species.

—Jeff Cooper
Editor-at-large, Guns & Ammo
Paulden, AZ

Dr. Kirkpatrick Replies:

Mr. Cooper is correct in stating, as others have done at length, that the nature of the war in the Pacific was quite different from that in Europe. No doubt, in addition, a group of volunteers is often very different from a group of draftees, even if the draftees thought that they should fight, as the men of the 99th largely did. That difference is likely to be especially marked when the volunteers have a culture like that of the Marines.

A bit of the Marine's age-old contempt for the U.S. Army comes through in Mr. Cooper's letter. In the case of World War II, this is based on a misperception, for the reluctant warrior may be, nevertheless, a very effective one. To think otherwise is to make the mistake that the South made about the North in our own Civil War and the Germans and Japanese made about the Americans in World War II. Perhaps the Spartans underestimated the Thebans as well.

I also concede the point that there are men who love to kill, for whom, "when blows begin to be exchanged, the pervading emotion is one of exhilaration." They run such places as Iraq, and, perhaps, we need them in this world. However, I for one do not want them to make decisions for the rest of us.

On Evangelism

I find it hard to share Doug Bandow's enthusiasm for the minimal religious freedom allowed Christians in Kuwait ("Letter From Kuwait: Religious Freedom in the Gulf," *Correspondence*, November 2002).

While Kuwait does allow Christian clergymen to minister to their flocks, it is those who have never heard the Gospel who primarily need the evangelist. Is it right to celebrate when Christians are forbidden to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20) by an Islamic state? Saint Paul's concern applies here: "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14).

The best instruction conservatives can derive from Mr. Bandow's letter involves

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how a country can prevent its predominant religion from being displaced. While the U.S. government continues to allow almost every conceivable religious group to enter America to do all the proselytizing it wants, nearly all Muslim countries forbid such immigration. This may be extremist and oppressive, but it does show the great contrast between the Muslim world—fiercely devoted to preserving its religious culture and heritage—and the post-Christian, secular West, whose governments not only allow but encourage mass Islamic immigration, which hastens the death of the Christendom that has undergirded European civilization for millennia.

—Kenneth Reynolds
The Bronx, NY

Mr. Bandow Replies:

Obviously, no Christian can celebrate the strictures, formal or informal, against evangelism in Kuwait. But the context is important: As I noted, "it is rare to find a Muslim country where Christians are not routinely discriminated against, oppressed, and even killed." Moreover, freely operating churches offer a public witness to Christianity; tens of thousands of Christians, working in various homes and businesses, act as informal ambassadors for Christ. Thus, Kuwait is, as I reported, "a relative oasis of freedom" in the Muslim world.

On Globalist TV

Let me take issue with one aspect of the recent and inspired E. Michael Jones piece, "The Family Against the Globalists" (*Views*, November 2002). Dr. Jones suggests that television is supplanting the virtues that are central to families with the values central to the global marketplace and includes a call to action, something frequently lacking in *Chronicles*.

Where I would differ is over the source of television's adverse impact. The effective force enabling television to destroy *ethnos* is its inherent nature as an advertising medium in an economy fueled by useless consumer goods. The point is suggested by George Garrett in *The Sorrows of Fat City*, where he relates that, as a young CBS writer, he was made to understand that, for the masters of television, what mattered most were the commercials. The medium, Garrett argues, was conceived and is managed primarily to advertise, not to entertain, and what fills the gaps between commercials scarcely matters, as long as it is produced cheaply and does not cause the ordinary viewer to change the channel.

Regardless of the programming content, the ultimate message of television as advertising medium is that we should seek fulfillment in the acquisition of consumer goods. The image reflected back to everyone gazing at the tube is of a person who needs only the latest dross in fashions, gadgets, or junk food to be happy, complete, and accepted. By telling us that we are what we buy, television seeks to supplant our relationship to family and locale with a relationship to the global market. Through advertising, television insidiously and unopposedly attacks our identities as members of a family, a neighborhood, a town, and a region—an attack that wears away at the *ethnos* Dr. Jones rightly wishes to protect.

Chronicles should explore whether mainstream media, and television in particular, can ever bear messages favoring values other than those of consumerism—whether they could, in any circumstances, be used or even coopted in support of other values.

—Kevin R. Davis
Nashville, TN

Dr. Jones Replies:

I completely agree with what Mr. Davis says about television. It is an instrument of control that serves the interests of those who own the networks, not those who own the TV sets. *Ethnos* is the first casualty of television, as the late Fritz Wilhelmson points out in his brilliant (if uneven) book *Telepolitics*. His account of what happened to Spain and Quebec after the arrival of television is the best analysis yet of the effects this machine has on local cultures. The second casualty of television is family life, as Mr. Davis rightly points out.

My only quarrel with Mr. Davis's analysis is that it doesn't go far enough. As with pornography, which has already made its way onto European TV and will be here sooner or later, certain groups are allowed to profit from something because it serves a political purpose. Economic benefits, while important, are not the whole story. They are like military tactics, whereas political benefits are like strategy. So certain people make money off the fact that television creates a passive and isolated populace, but other groups benefit from that fact politically. They are the ones who enable it to be what it is.

The rich and powerful control television for their benefit. However, as Wilhelmson points out when he critiques the classic Catholic misunderstanding of TV as a neutral tool, the medium itself creates passivity, regardless of its content. Try to hold an intelligent conversation in a sports bar. Try to hold any conversation. Try not to be distracted by the TV screen. Except for a three-year period in Germany when we lived in a furnished apartment, we have never had a TV in the 33 years we have been married, yet, while attending my wife in labor at the local hospital, I found it impossible not to watch the TV screen, even though I was fully aware that the birth of my children was more important than whatever soap opera was playing at the time.

I cite these examples to make a simple point: The medium is more powerful and more pernicious than any possible content it might convey. Even if TV were programmed by saints, the net result over the long haul would be an increase of passivity and stupidity. It should be obvious by now that television is manifestly not being run by saints, and so any "good" programming will invariably function as a Trojan horse. It will act as a justification for bringing the TV into the house and have the same effect on *oikos* and *ethnos* as the eponymous Greek gift had on Troy.

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Furnishing the War

"War is the health of the state," said Randolph Bourne; it is also a bonanza for political intellectuals and for the marionettes who are put through their paces on FOX and CNN. At the outbreak of World War I, Bourne saw the same phenomenon, though admittedly on a higher scale (Paul Begala and Chris Matthews had not yet been invented):

> it has been a bitter experience to see the unanimity with which the American intellectuals have thrown their support to the use of war-technique in the crisis in which America found herself. Socialists, college professors, publicists, new-republicans, practitioners of literature, have vied with each other in confirming with their intellectual faith the collapse of neutrality and the riveting of the war-mind on a hundred million more of the world's people.

News-talk ratings go up during every international crisis, but, despite the thousands of hours devoted to the looming war with Iraq, Americans are no better informed about the goals and prospects of this war than they were in 1898, when William Randolph Hearst told the artist Fredrick Remington, whom he had sent to Cuba, "You furnish the pictures, I'll furnish the war." Hearst did not care one way or the other about Cuba, but he did want to beat his rival newspaper, Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*, in the 19th-century precursor of the ratings game. In 1898, the yellow press instructed Americans that the evil Spanish Empire had blown up the battleship *Maine* in order to provoke the United States into a war that Spain could not, in fact, hope to win. In 2002, the yellow press is telling Americans that Saddam Hussein wants to provoke the United States into a war that will inevitably destroy his country and, what is more important to him, his regime.

The press, as obedient and uninformed today as they were during previous wars, dutifully repeat the phrases "weapons of mass destruction" and "links with Al Qaeda terrorists." Instead of citing evidence, they refer to official British reports (as if Tony Blair did not lie throughout the war against Yugoslavia) and unnamed administration sources. The announcement of links to terrorism is always front-page news above the fold; the retractions, a few months later, are buried and forgotten. Some commentators still refer to the debunked story of a meeting in Prague between Muhammad Atta and Iraqi officials.

In early December, the *Washington Post* headlined the usual story by Barton Gellman "U.S. Suspects Al Qaeda Got Nerve Agent From Iraqis." Gellman, true to the great traditions of the *Post*'s Bob Woodward and Janet Cooke, simply passed on the official story without checking any details. This goes on every day, on every story.

In earlier times, once the rulers had decided upon a course of action, the peasants had only to obey, supplying food, money, and clothing to the king's army and their sons as cannon fodder for the campaign. Under self-proclaimed democracies, power supposedly resides with the people, who send their representatives to Washington or to Paris; for the people to have any say in the political process, however, they would have to have access to accurate information, and if such information was ever available in the history of the United States, it is not available now. Ignorant people, subjected to an educational process that now consists exclusively of indoctrination, cannot make informed decisions. In this sense, Americans are less free than the medieval peasant who knew he was not free and might, therefore, when the king's officers came around, take steps to hide his money in the well or his son in the woods.

In a modern state, democracy (in the loose sense in which we use the word) depends on an honest and free press. Such a press exists nowhere, least of all in the United States. There are, of course, honest specialists who are occasionally allowed to share their expertise in the newspapers, and there are even honest commentators, such as Pat Buchanan and Alex Cockburn, who usually say what they believe. For the most part, however, the gatherers and spinners of news, either from fear and ambition or from laziness and ignorance, do not do their job, which is to inform the public.

In the case of Iraq, many of the key questions are simply not being asked. What, for example, is the role being played by international oil interests? To what extent is our legitimate concern for the security of Israel taking precedence over the security and interests of the American people? How important is it, in this connection, to shift the balance of power in the Middle East, by eliminating one of Israel's few obstacles to regional hegemony? It seems strange that the press cannot discuss the fact that the administration's policies in the Middle East are being set by Richard Perle, who is also a political activist in Israel on behalf of the bellicose Benjamin Netanyahu.

The press tells us every day that Saddam possesses weapons of mass destruction. He probably does, because, during the Iran-Iraq war, he acquired such weapons, with the blessing of the U.S. government, from France, Russia, and the United States itself. A recent report in the German press lists Siemens, along with unnamed American multinationalists, among Saddam's major suppliers. The fact that the United States is the largest producer and possessor and seller of such weapons cannot be discussed, and if it is mentioned (*e.g.*, on a call-in show like *Talk of the Nation*), the host cuts off discussion by repeating the Bush administration's highly improbable denial.

A war with Iraq, justified or not, may well accomplish some good things: the overthrow of a regime of thugs, increased U.S. control of the world's oil supply, enhanced security for Israel (which may then find herself in a stronger position to resolve the question of Palestinian statehood). In the long run, however, the war might turn out to be a disaster. Ideally, it is up to Congress to debate such questions, but Congress follows public opinion as measured by polls, and public opinion is manufactured by the media. We cannot expect the government to share its secrets with us, but we should demand that the press do its job. ©

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UNITED AIRLINES' December 9 bankruptcy filing came as no surprise to those who understand the airline industry, in which even America's most successful living investor, Warren E. Buffet, could not turn a profit. Buffett once observed, "In a business selling a commodity-type product it's impossible to be a lot smarter than your dumbest competitor." Mr. Buffett's investment company, Berkshire Hathaway Inc., lost money by purchasing convertible preferred stock in U.S. Air in 1989, a decision he later termed "a mistake" in his annual letter to shareholders. At the time of purchase, he told them, "We have no ability to forecast the economies of the investment banking business, the airline industry, or the paper industry." Two years later, he observed, "At the time some of you may have doubted this confession of ignorance. Now, however, even my mother acknowledges its truth." U.S. Air later filed for bankruptcy, one of more than 125 carriers to do so since the 1978 federal deregulation of the industry.

The economics of the airline industry are lousy even when the economy is expanding. Carriers face high capital costs (the purchase of new airplanes) and have difficulty making price increases stick. Pre-deregulation airlines were protected from competition and could pass their high capital structures on to consumers in the form of higher ticket prices. Today, they face intense competition and industry economics made worse by an economy in contraction. Seventeen carriers filed for bankruptcy during two recessions in the 1980-82 period, and 11 more went bankrupt in the 1990-91 recession. UAL, United Airlines' parent company, followed Midway Airlines in filing for bankruptcy during the current recession. In its last quarterly report to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), United's management listed some of the challenges involved in operating an airline: "The airline business is subject to seasonal fluctuations. Additionally, beginning in 2001, the weakening U.S. economy had a significant impact on the airline industry as corporations reduced their business travel budgets and changed their travel behavior. During the first six months of 2001, the industry began experiencing significant revenue declines as a result of the decrease in business traffic."

The September 11 terrorist attacks, the U.S. war against Afghanistan, and the impending war against Iraq have made operating an airline even more difficult. In a November 26 pre-bankruptcy SEC filing, United's management reported, "Some factors that could significantly impact the company's performance and financial condition include, without limitation: the economy and the demand for air travel; the effects of any hostilities or act of war (in the Middle East or elsewhere) or any terrorist attacks; the higher costs associated with new airline security directives and any other increased regulation of air carriers; the significantly higher costs of aircraft insurance coverage for future claims caused by acts of war, terrorism, sabotage, hijacking and other similar perils, and the extent to which such insurance will continue to be available; the ability to raise and the cost of financing in light of the Sept. 11 events and the possibility of any further credit downgrades to the company; the cost of crude oil and jet fuel." Other carriers in the industry face similar challenges, according to their SEC filings, and still more bankruptcy filings are possible.

United's ultimate fate is yet to be determined, but other carriers filing for bankruptcy have survived with a different corporate structure. U.S. bankruptcy courts have encouraged bankrupt carriers to continue operations. They can charge fares below industry costs because they do not incur the capital costs faced by solvent carriers. Herb Kelleher, CEO of Southwest Airlines, the most successful domestic airline, is reported to have observed that "Bankruptcy court for airlines has become a health spa."

Deregulation in the past quarter-century has made air travel possible for a broader cross section of America's middle class, and, thus, it is unlikely to be repealed. Nor are Americans likely to support government nationalization of the sector. The industry may gradually come to resemble another one with high capital costs and a falling price structure: the automotive industry. Instead of many airlines characterized by product differentiation *à la* Southwest, the industry may become an oligopoly.

—*Greg Kaza*

CANADIAN OFFICIALS have been badgering the United States for deporting Syrian Maher Arar from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport in October 2002. The Canadian government, however, is not entitled to display such moral outrage.

Mr. Arar was removed from the United States for alleged terrorist connections. Because he held both Canadian and Syrian citizenship, the U.S. authorities were well within their rights in sending him to Syria. Since Mr. Arar flew to New York from Tunisia, the United States could even have chosen to return him to that country. These are the normal procedures for the deportation of aliens who do not meet a country's entry requirements; indeed, Canada's immigration law has similar provisions. Before his removal, Mr. Arar was seen by a Canadian consular official and was allowed legal representation at his deportation hearing. This incident received considerable attention in Canada, with most stories highlighting outrage that a Canadian citizen should be treated in such a manner. The fact that Mr. Arar was also a citizen of Syria was never taken into account.

Arar's suspected terrorist connections appear to have been ignored by the Canadian media and neglected by government officials. During his recent visit to Canada, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell revealed that evidence linking Mr. Arar to Al Qaeda had been given by the FBI to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) soon after his removal from the United States. Obviously, the RCMP had not seen fit to pass this information on to Canadian foreign-affairs officials. The evident lack of information-sharing by security agencies should be a cause for concern for all Canadians, particularly now that Osama bin Laden has placed Canada on Al Qaeda's hit list. More seriously, however, the Arar case points to the indifference that has characterized Canada's response to the War on Terror.

The United States has moved quickly to enact measures designed to help prevent terrorist attacks against her citizens. One such measure has been to require visitors to the United States who were born in Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, and Syria to be photographed, fingerprinted, and registered, regardless of their current citi-

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zenship. This ensures that the U.S. government is able to screen and track aliens who may present a possible security risk.

The reaction of much of the Canadian media and many members of Parliament has bordered on hysteria. Instead of sympathizing with the legitimate concerns that underlie the new U.S. measures, Canada protested, claiming such procedures discriminated against certain Canadian citizens. Canada even took the extraordinary step of issuing a travel advisory telling Canadians born in the countries on the U.S. list to "consider carefully" whether to travel to the United States.

Dual or even multiple citizenship is permitted under Canadian law. Thousands of Canadians frequently travel on two passports, using whichever one is more convenient at the time. There can be advantages and disadvantages to this arrangement, as Mr. Arar has found out.

It only takes three years to acquire Canadian citizenship after becoming a landed immigrant. The rationale is that the sooner new immigrants can obtain citizenship, the sooner they can vote. This may be a commendable criterion for qualifying newcomers for participating in the Canadian political process, but it is not a guarantee against terrorist activity. There are at least three Canadian citizens now in custody who have been accused of active involvement in terrorist operations; one has been charged with killing an American soldier in a firefight in Afghanistan.

What many of my fellow Canadians fail to understand is that the United States has reason to be concerned about our government's approach to terrorism and domestic security. Canada continues to allow thousands of young men from terrorist-producing countries to enter Canada as asylum seekers. Many are smuggled into the country without documents. Our foreign minister inexplicably refuses to admit that Hezbollah is a terrorist organization, despite unequivocal evidence from our own security service that Hezbollah uses funds raised in Canada to buy weapons and other military equipment for its terrorist activities.

Pat Buchanan may have gone too far in describing Canada as the "Soviet Canuckistan," but the United States has no reason to be confident that Canada has taken the terrorist threat seriously. The self-righteous sniping at the United States' sensible efforts to prevent another horrific terrorist attack reflects Canada's present state of denial that the terrorist threat is real.

—James Bissett

SADDAM HUSSEIN, a Kremlin source told the Russian Information Agency (RIA-Novosti), "isn't so nice that you would want to defend him just for his own sake." Following the December 12, 2002, announcement by the Iraqi government that it had cancelled its contract with Russia's Lukoil, which held the rights to develop Iraq's vast West Kurna oil field, there was no longer any reason for Russia to pretend that it opposed military action against Iraq as a matter of principle: Russia, as the anonymous source told RIA-Novosti, would look after her economic interests. By canceling the contract, Baghdad was merely acknowledging what most observers had maintained since last fall: Russia had made a bargain with Washington regarding possible "regime change" in Iraq. If the United States decided to use military force to overthrow Saddam, Moscow would make no serious effort to stop it. In exchange, as President Bush himself stated in a November interview with Russia's NTV, Washington would "take into account" Russia's "economic interests" in a post-Saddam scenario. By scuttling the Lukoil contract, Baghdad probably was attempting to complicate matters for the Russian turncoats, whose claims to a share of Iraq's oil wealth are based on such deals.

Chronicles readers are aware that Lukoil may have been pressured to adopt a pro-American stance by Russian petro-oligarchs eager to cooperate with Washington in hopes of serving as an alternative (to OPEC) oil source for the United States (see *Cultural Revolutions*, December 2002). In December, one Russian oil executive stated plainly that U.S. companies had been involved in "blackmailing" some Russian firms. Nikolay Tokarev, who heads Zarubezhneft, claimed that his company, which has operated in Iraq since the 1960's, was told it must finance the Iraqi opposition in return for being allowed to continue to operate in a post-Saddam Iraq. Tokarev said, without offering specific details, that certain other Russian companies were involved in a "dirty game" with the United States. The Russian oil executive shrugged off suggestions that Washington's anti-Iraq moves were in any way connected to President Bush's "War on Terror": "For the Americans, this venture, despite all the political rhetoric, is aimed at gaining control over the oil market."

U.S. actions in Central Asia, the Trans-Caucasus/Caspian Basin, and Iraq do, indeed, appear to be part of a coordinated effort to gain influence—if not outright dominance—in several of the most important current and potential oil-producing regions in the world. While it is true that the War on Terror, together with Washington's recent recognition that powerful OPEC member Saudi Arabia is an unreliable partner, triggered the Iraq plan, it is also likely that U.S. oil companies and politicians close to them have been eyeing Iraq for some time. (President Bush's and Vice President Cheney's ties to the "oil patch" are well known; National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice is a former Chevron board member.)

Iraq boasts the second-largest known oil reserves in the world, after Saudi Arabia, as well as considerable gas fields. Some experts believe that there may be additional deposits there, possibly enough to make Iraq the equal of Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Iraqi oil is of high quality and relatively cheap to produce: Whoever controls the oil fields of Iraq stands to realize huge profits. U.S. and British oil firms held the dominant position in Iraq's oil industry until the 1972 nationalization of the Iraq Oil Company. Subsequently, Baghdad turned to French and Soviet firms for aid in developing its vast holdings. Naturally, U.S. and British companies have supported U.N. sanctions against Baghdad, since the sanctions prevented Russian, French, and Chinese rivals from fully exploiting the Iraqi oil deposits. Just as naturally, Moscow, Paris, and Beijing have lobbied for the lifting of those sanctions, though it had become increasingly apparent that the United States had no intention of allowing that to happen, which may help to explain why Russia, France, and China seem to have reached an agreement with the United States about protecting their interests in Iraq after Saddam.

It appears that last fall's U.N. wrangling (with Russia, France, and China bargaining with the United States over the terms of the U.N. resolution on Iraqi weapons inspections) and the Bush administration's decision to shift its War on Terror to Iraq have more to do with the economic interests of various oil firms than with maintaining the United Nations' international role or fighting actual terrorists. Any future argument among the principals will likely be a sign of continued bargaining over the terms and conditions for removing Saddam.

The coming U.S. war on Iraq is no mere Bush vendetta against a Third World dictator; it is an extension of the Great

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Game among the world's most powerful countries and corporations. It is probably too much to ask that Washington policymakers be honest about their true motives in pursuing regime change in Iraq. Americans have shown themselves willing to wage war against terror, but nobody has asked them whether they are willing to bear the material and human costs of waging war to alter the current international order and to stir up an already volatile region of the world so that U.S. and British oil companies can reap huge profits from selling Iraqi oil.

—*Wayne Allensworth*

OBITER DICTA: Don't delay in registering for The Rockford Institute's **Paris Convivium**, May 16-22, 2003. The trip is almost sold out, so be sure to call Christopher Check, executive vice president, at (815) 964-5811 before clipping out and sending in the registration form on the inside front cover.

In this issue, we are pleased to debut the second of our three new rotating columns on our final page. Our editors are often asked, "Where can I find a good resource on [X]?" ***The Non-Idiot's Guide*** will offer helpful suggestions for beginners as well as seasoned researchers interested in a particular featured topic. Be sure to check out our growing archive of *Non-Idiot's Guides* on our website, *www.ChroniclesMagazine.org*, where you can click on the links offered in the magazine or e-mail your suggestions for future installments. And be sure to check the final page of future issues for our third new column, ***Living Well***.

Chronicles' production schedule has been changed to allow extra time for the production of our quarterly 60-page issues (January, April, July, and October). Thus, the dates for 2003 on which *Chronicles* will be available on your newsstand, beginning with the March issue, are as follows: March, February 25; April, April 1; May, April 29; June, May 27; July, July 1; August, July 29; September, August 26; October, September 30; November, October 28; and December, November 25. If you are a subscriber and have not received your issue by the date listed, please call (800) 877-5459.

Our first poet this month is **Richard Moore** from Belmont, Massachusetts. Mr. Moore is the author of nine books of poetry, as well as translations of *Plautus* and *Euripides*, a book of literary essays, and a novel, *The Investigator*. His most recent book of verse, *The Naked Scarecrow*, was published by the Truman State University Press in 2000. Mr. Moore conducts The Poetry Exchange in the Harvard COOP and gives frequent readings in the Boston area.

Our second poet is **John Nixon, Jr.**, a Bellaman Award winner from Fork Union, Virginia, who was co-editor of the *Lyric* for 16 years. His poetry has appeared in, among others, the *New Yorker*, *America*, *Christian Century*, the *New York Times*, and the *Georgia Review*.

This month's art is provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and he attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

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by Thomas Fleming

Imperialism From the Cradle to the Grave

> In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid.

Mesopotamia was the cradle of empires, but it was also their grave, as the Persians were to discover. The Persians were a great people, whose simple code of honor—ride a horse, shoot straight, and tell the truth—was admired by their Greek enemies. The conquest of Babylon in 537 B.C. (the occasion of Cyrus's edict), although it sealed Persia's fate as an imperial nation doomed to degenerate and fail, shows the Persians flushed with success but determined to deal justly with their subjects. Although it has been conjectured that the Persians were rewarding the Babylonian Jews for covert assistance in the defeat of Nabonidus, the last Babylonian king, there is no need to posit any special relationship between a tiny and helpless people and the greatest ruler of the day. It was Cyrus's general policy to reverse the oppression inflicted by Babylonian and Assyrian rulers, who had driven defeated enemies into exile and resettled foreigners in the vacated lands. This *divide et impera* strategy would be emulated by later tyrants.

The Assyrians permanently destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the Babylonians, after conquering the people of Judah, although they did allow many Jews to remain in their own country, drove skilled workers and much of the elite class into exile and destroyed and looted Solomon's Temple, whose ruins were a potent symbol of cultural genocide. The Assyrians and their Babylonian successors wrote the book on tyranny and empire, setting an example to be imitated by future conquerors, no matter how noble their motives. The Persian Cyrus the Great, for example, understood that leaving people alone to enjoy their own customs and worship their own gods is a better means of securing the loyalty of subjects than the orgy of destruction and bloodshed over which the Assyrian documents so lovingly gloat. But the comparative decency and humanity of the Persians, glorified not only by Ezra but in Daniel and in Isaiah (who calls Cyrus *messiah*), must have come as relief, a gentle morning after the long nightmare of Assyrian and Babylonian misrule.

The Babylonian Nabonidus was not so much a tyrant as an eccentric. His mother was from Haran (one of Abraham's cities), where she was priestess of the moon-god Sin, and, as king, Nabonidus devoted much of his time to elevating his mother's deity over the gods of the Babylonian pantheon. Many Babylonians thought the old man (already in his 60's when he came to power in 355 B.C.) was insane—claiming victory in battles that had never taken place (as if a general should wear a combat ribbon without ever serving in combat). The powerful priests of Marduk had even stronger opinions. And yet this "archeologist king" not only rebuilt the temple of Sin but restored ancient temples and revived religious and cultural traditions of the Sumerian and Akkadian peoples.

Those traditions can be traced, in written documents, back to the early third millennium B.C., when the peoples of Sumerian city-states—Lagash, Uruk, Larsa, Eridu, Kish, and Ur—were laying the groundwork for the civilization that was later enriched and reinvented by Greeks and Romans, before being passed down to us. Outside of Mesopotamia (and Egypt), other early peoples are only so much bones and rubbish, and their "histories" are told as catalogues of pottery styles and methods of interment. But the Sumerians and Akkadians, and the peoples of Mari and Nineveh who followed them, we know as distinct men, who lived and died, killed and loved, and worshiped their gods, whose deeds are the central subject of their literatures. And if the Sumerians created civilization, their Akkadian successors gave birth to the first empire. In legend, Sargon had a miraculous birth (entrusted, like Moses, to a basket that was put into a river), and he grew up to be the lover of Ishtar. The reality, however, is almost as remarkable. Sargon conquered much of the Middle East, proclaiming himself "king of the four corners of the world," and, after his death, his name became (like Caesar's) synonymous with empire.

To visualize Sargon's "empire" and the lands ruled by his successors, it is helpful to imagine a map. Babylon was on the Euphrates River, southwest of modern Baghdad (on the Tigris). Upstream from Babylon lay Mari, whose records give us so lively a picture of early Semitic life, as well as Assur and Nineveh, the Assyrian capitals. Downstream on the Euphrates lay Ur, the imperial city of the Sumerians. Ancient Babylon was not far from Agade, the city that commemorates the name of the Akkadians, the Semitic people that intermingled with the Sumerians and eventually, without ever forgetting their debt, took the reins of political and cultural hegemony. In terms of modern cities, this land between the rivers, or Mesopotamia, stretches from Mosul in the north (near ancient Nineveh, the city that Jonah called, so reluctantly, to repentance) and southeastward down the Euphrates to Basra, which lies east of Ur and Eridu.

In other words, *Iraq*, a name Arabs and Persians applied to the southern coast of the region, is what we learned in the fifth grade to call the Fertile Crescent, the Cradle of Civilization. An antiquarian king such as Nabonidus might well exult in the heritage of his land, and both he and his priestess mother appear to have made a collection of antiquities. By Herodotus' time, many of these cities already lay in ruins underneath the blowing sands, and, although there were haphazard excavations and looting expeditions in the 19th century, the land of the black-headed people did not receive systematic investigation until the 20th century, at the hands of such archeologists as Sir Leonard Wooley, who revealed the glories of Ur.

"Ur of the Chaldees," where Abraham was living before he set out for Canaan, is one of the richest archeological sites on the planet, and the artifacts recovered testify to the brilliance of Sumerian civilization. Later rulers, such as the Bible's Nebuchadnezzar (Nebuchadrezzar II of Babylon), left their mark on the city—and their names on inscriptions and bricks. Even the current successor to Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar, Saddam Hussein,

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has had his name inscribed on bricks at Ur and other ancient sites and said, during the Iran-Iraq War, that he was carrying on the Babylonians' age-old struggle against the Persians. During the Gulf War, according to U.S. sources, Saddam parked two MIGs near the temple of Ur, but, out of respect for antiquity, the U.S. Air Force did not attack them. Locals—and archeologists—tell a different story: Bomb craters pockmark the earth, and the temple itself bears evidence of strafing.

Although much was made of the "smart" bombs used in the Gulf War, most (more than 80 percent) of the bombs dropped on Iraq were stupid bombs deployed in nondiscriminatory clusters of 40 to 60 at a time. According to an article in the *Nation*,

> This blind bombing most likely damaged a large percentage of Iraq's 10,000 known archaeological sites. Unfortunately, the UN Security Council will not allow foreign archaeologists into Iraq to fully [*sic*] assess the damage.

Nineveh, the Assyrian capital that remains a symbol of empire and its futility, has also suffered, not from bombing but from looting and vandalism. John Malcolm Russell was one of the archeologists on the Berkeley team that excavated the palace of Sennacherib (who, in the Byron poem, "Came down like a wolf on the fold" to attack Jerusalem). Russell has repeatedly warned collectors and scholars of the recent appearance of looted and vandalized art treasures from Nineveh. The worst part is not the theft itself but the scattering of artifacts and the breakup of cuneiform inscriptions that are now reduced to nonsense.

Russell points out that, since 1847, when Henry Layard discovered the palace, Western governments and art collectors have been looting the treasures of Mesopotamia. Since the creation of the state of Iraq, however, the government has tried to stop the looting, but the Gulf War and U.S.-imposed sanctions have changed all that:

> [R]esources have been diverted from nonessential areas such as the preservation of antiquities and heritage at the same time that newly impoverished Iraqis, squeezed between ruinous inflation and critical shortages of basic necessities, have been forced to seek new sources of subsistence income.

Russell does not implicate Iraqi officials in these thefts. (The fact that the site is within the northern "no-fly" zone makes government surveillance still more difficult.) "Like the wolf on the fold," he concludes, "the United Nations sanctions against Iraq have finally destroyed Sennacherib's palace, finishing the work begun by the ancient Medes and Babylonians who sacked Nineveh in 612 BC."

Good riddance, one might be tempted to say, since the Assyrians were a nasty lot who excelled in the refinements of mayhem and torture—skinning alive was a favorite technique. It is sometimes supposed that the Assyrian chroniclers exaggerate the violence, but the ruins of Ashdod, a Philistine city that tried to reassert its independence from Sargon II, reveal a grisly story. Israeli archeologists (Moshe and Trude Dothan) found dozens of dismembered bodies thrown into a pit, a stack of ten skulls (eight of them with two or three vertebrae attached), as well as the remains of hundreds of children, adolescents, and adults—all in one small area. Egypt, which might once have come to the rescue of her Philistine satellite, had been reduced to a cipher, and the rulers of Ashdod had made the mistake of thinking they could stand up to their world's only remaining superpower.

The Persians came into Assyria as high-minded liberators, but, within a generation or two, they had gone native, imitating the quaint customs of the locals. By the time the Persians attempted the conquest of Greece in the early fifth century, Herodotus, who appreciated the Persians' good qualities, was able to see the Persian Wars as part of the ongoing struggle between Hellenic Europe and barbaric Asia. The Macedonians and Greeks who overthrew the Persians and took over Mesopotamia also began on a high note, but they, too, fell in with local traditions, and the record of the later Seleucid rulers is stained with the blood of tyrants. It was Antiochus Epiphanes' attempt to hellenize the Jews by force that brought on the revolt of the Maccabees.

The Romans, who were invited by the Jews to intervene on their behalf, succeeded the Macedonians, but, although Rome's eastern provinces brought great wealth, the project was a costly adventure that entailed generations of warfare against the Parthians and, later, the revived kingdom of the Persians. Some of the greatest defeats suffered by the Roman army were in these wars: At Carrhae (Abraham's Haran, where the Babylonians had defeated the Assyrians seven centuries earlier) in 53 B.C., for instance, when Crassus the triumvir was trapped, captured, and executed. (His severed head, sent to the Parthian court, was used as an impromptu stage prop.) The struggle for control of Mesopotamia dragged on for centuries. Marching against the Persians, Emperor Julian met defeat and death in A.D. 363. The Eastern (or Byzantine) emperor Heraclius finally conquered the Persians, but the victory proved very costly. Not only had the empire exhausted its resources in the struggle, but, with Persia out of the way, it had to face the gathering storm of Islamic terrorism—alone.

The Romans and Byzantines were not the last Western peoples to attempt to dominate Mesopotamia. They were followed, 400 years later, by the Crusaders, who came to rescue the Holy Land and remained to become as degenerate as "their paynim foe." Britain arrived in force after World War I, to ensure a stable and pro-British government and, as time went on, to control the oil fields. Their mischievous creativity in making states by drawing lines on maps has only contributed to the instability of the Middle East. If any of these well-intentioned Western powers thought they could rid the Middle East of violence and tyranny, they should have been quickly disabused.

Enter the not-so-quiet Americans. There is no doubt about our capacity to conquer the current tyranny in charge of the Cradle of Civilization, but at what cost and to what purpose? There are less violent ways to secure the oil that fuels the U.S. economy, and no one should have any illusions—after 5,000 years—about bringing peace and democracy to Babylonia and Assyria. Our grandchildren will not live to see that day, but, should they wish to prowl among the ruins of a civilization that died in their grandparents' time, will they still be able to visit Ur and Nineveh?

Empire—or, rather, the concept of benevolent global hegemony—is one of the gifts of Mesopotamia, but it is a poisoned chalice. The story of the Tower of Babel is the Bible's commentary on the Babylonians' attempt to build a multiethnic state, and the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon and Persepolis should warn the ruggedest imperialist against the danger of walking in the footsteps of Sargon and Sennacherib. c

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Overman

by Richard Moore

Mankind's intelligence is the earth's curse.
How did he get that out-sized, whopper brain,
who'd swung breezing through trees? Walking upright
did it, and running after animals.
Wearing them out, his brain got overheated,

synapses blew. He needed extra brain
to supply spare parts, keep from going gaga;
and now the damn things won't stop operating.
Look! They've dreamt up civilizations, arts
and sciences, gone blasting to the moon,

made mushroom clouds, generate greenhouse gasses,
and worst of all, write stupid poems about it.
Hateful big brains create a taste for grandeur.
The victim uses *words*, loosens from *things*,
cogitates, dreams up horrors for himself

and everyone. God, is there no escape?
Listen: in Africa, the home of all the
biodiversity that produced *him*,
there's been a new species developing,
men so intelligent, they give up thinking,

tuned to the lost harmonies of the world,
the things they touch, the dishes they are washing,
the feelings in their bones, tastes in their mouths,
the casual engagements of their fingers.
That way, *things* master *them*, discover them.

So more and more they'll thrive, dominate even.
Then what? Campaigns to weed them out? No doubt.
How can such weeding ever be complete?
What if the new men move among us now,
dying for life that blooms for us unnoticed?

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by Philip Jenkins

FDR: The Moral Reckoning

Dear Editor:

Attached please find the proposal for my latest book, *Franklin Roosevelt: The Antichrist Unmasked*. While I know some people will dismiss my thesis as foolish (or even "crazy"), the wave of recent books published by major presses like yours gives me reason to hope that the truth can at last be told.

I am especially optimistic because of the books published in the last three or four years about the Roman Catholic Church and the holocaust, by such authors as John Cornwell, James Carroll, Garry Wills, and especially Daniel J. Goldhagen. As you are aware, these books argue that Pope Pius XII was a drooling antisemite and a more-or-less overt Nazi who never criticized Hitler and never did a thing to help his Jewish victims. Though each of these writers sometimes goes off the deep end, Dr. Goldhagen is in a category by himself, most visibly in his recent book, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*. He asserts that only the "many sleights of hand" engaged in by "the defenders of the church" have prevented a full exposure of "the Catholic role in the slaughter of the Jews." In the *New Republic* last year, Goldhagen even claimed that

> Any evaluation of the Catholic Church as a moral institution must centrally take into account that in effect the Church was serving—because not to choose is to choose—the closest human analogue to the Antichrist. I mean Hitler; and that it tacitly and sometimes materially aided him in mass murder.

This passage finally gave me the courage to write my exposé. Based on far stronger arguments that Dr. Goldhagen employs to prove the Antichrist status of Pope Pius, I can make no less apocalyptic claims about Franklin D. Roosevelt.

This comparison is really irrefutable. For one thing, for all the recent best-sellers about Pope Pius, there actually is next to no evidence against him. Throughout the 1930's, Pius and the Vatican abused Nazism publicly in terms that we more often associate with Winston Churchill. As Vatican secretary of state in 1937, Pius must have had a role in drafting the strongly anti-Hitler encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*. At enormous risk to individual Catholics, copies of this work were smuggled into Germany to be read in churches, to the fury of the Nazi regime. This was silence? For any historian accustomed to the mealy-mouthed attitudes of the Western democracies in the 1930's, Pius must emerge as a hero. During the war years, the Vatican saved hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives, a contribution repeatedly praised by highly placed Jewish and Israeli leaders. By 1943, the Nazis were planning to kidnap Pius, probably intending that he should be "shot while trying to escape."

All of which brings me neatly to Franklin D. Roosevelt. One of the points made by all of Pius's critics is that, in 1933, he was chiefly responsible for organizing the Vatican's concordat with the new Nazi regime, a pact that James Carroll terms "Nazi-legitimizing." As we have seen, though, this concordat did not prevent the Vatican from doing all it could to derail Nazi plans. Now contrast what happened when, in the same year, FDR established diplomatic relations with Stalin's Soviet Union, an event that supposedly proved "the desire of both countries for the peace and for the strengthening of the peaceful purpose of the civilized world." Unlike Pius's disenchantment with Hitler, FDR never lost his affection for Stalin. Excellent U.S.-Soviet relations survived the terror-famines of the early 1930's as well as the purges of later years, which reached their height of paranoid insanity during 1937. And make no mistake: The U.S. government knew very well what was happening, though it said nothing at the time.

The contrasts with Pius's behavior are overwhelming. No American emissaries to Russia smuggled into the country Rooseveltian declarations asserting "burning concern" about the purges or their victims. American politicians did nothing to help political dissidents and ethnic or religious groups under threat of persecution or worse from the Soviet regime. No American officials raised a finger when churches and synagogues were extirpated across most of the Soviet territory. American bigwigs trotted loyally through what were portrayed as typical Soviet prison camps but were, in fact, stage sets designed to hide the horrors of the *Gulag* system. During the decade after 1935, even the most blatant revelations of Soviet espionage and dirty tricks on American soil received from FDR nothing stronger than a mild remonstrance, using the tone of "boys will be boys." The administration's romantic fawning on Uncle Joe reached unprecedented heights during the war years.

Putting these facts together, I think I can make the following statement without fear of contradiction: Any evaluation of the U.S. government as a moral institution must centrally take into account that, in effect, the United States was serving—because not to choose is to choose—the closest human analogue to the Antichrist (I mean Stalin) and that it tacitly, and sometimes materially, aided him in mass murder. Put more simply, Franklin D. Roosevelt was the servant of Satan, and the time has come for the United States to confront its unfulfilled duty of repair (QED).

Now, I realize that most Americans will regard this conclusion as hysterical nonsense, a defamation of a great national leader. But if the heroic Pius XII is subject to such constant vilification, simple consistency demands that equal or greater calumny be heaped on his American contemporaries, who were far more morally compromised in the face of totalitarianism and genocide.

Please send contract and substantial advance by return mail.

Yours very sincerely,

Philip Jenkins

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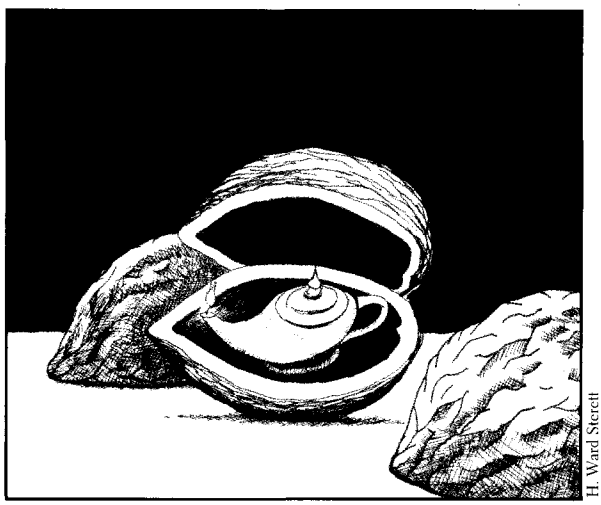
Our Yesterday and Your Today

A Tale of Two Empires

by Michael Stenton



Iraq is the land of the Tigris and the Euphrates, the fertile area around and between the two great rivers, the territory between Baghdad, the ancient capital of the entire Arab world, and Basra, over 500 miles away where the great rivers converge as the Shatt-el-Arab before entering the Persian Gulf. Some say Iraq is "artificial," but there would still be an Iraq even if she lost her Kurdish region or some Sunni Arab districts to Syria.

The story of British Iraq can be read as an allegory for problems and temptations that have recurred today.

Around 1900, Germany started to finance, advise, arm, and train the Ottoman Empire, and the British saw this as a threat to their own empire in Asia. They defeated this threat by the terrifyingly radical expedient of making an alliance with Russia and waging war on Germany. The destruction of the Ottoman Empire was a by-product of the war. Troops from India landed at the head of the Persian Gulf to take Basra. They set off up the Tigris but ran into serious trouble. Nine thousand British soldiers surrendered at a place called Kut; this provoked British fury. The Bedouin tribes were stirred up against the Turks with gold and promises, and Sir Stanley Maude was sent to Basra with reinforcements. Maude did much better: He captured Baghdad in March 1917. Maude, hailed as "Systematic Joe," became a popular hero—the "Stormin' Norman" of his day. He died in Baghdad a few months later of cholera.

The British army collected just about everything in the Middle East. But British heads, rinsed of caution by the excitement and single-mindedness of war, filled up with generous ambitions and romantic nonsense. General Allenby rode into Jerusalem on a white horse; Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour wrote to Lord Rothschild a letter promising the Jews a national home in Palestine; T.E. Lawrence posed for photographs in Arab garb, which helped to generate the pleasing idea that British success meant liberty for the Arabs; General Maude had promised Iraq self-government and was commemorated with a statue as the "Liberator of Baghdad"; the Greeks were promised Constantinople; the Kurds, a country.

In 1900, London did not seek more territory. By 1918, however, the old rulebook lay in tatters. The Arab world was going to be free and British: The Russians and the Germans could do absolutely nothing about it, and the French were but a minor nuisance. Sir Percy Cox, Britain's senior imperial official for the region, was annoyed one day by Arab mulishness during negotiations over the borders of Kuwait, so he simply snatched up a map, drew some lines, and told the assembled emirs that they would get what he gave them and no more. King Ibn Saud knew exactly what to do: He groveled as only aristocrats can grovel. Ibn Saud declared that Sir Percy was both his father and his mother and could have half his realm if he wanted it.

This placated Cox. Ibn Saud became a great man, founded a kingdom—Saudi Arabia—on bluff and British subsidies and, in due course, showed what he thought of England by giving the entire Saudi oil concession to an American consortium.

After 1919, things began to fall apart. By dividing up the Arab world and leaving the oil companies to do as they pleased, Britain lost her chance to be a benevolent patron. London was discarding promises like stock options on a failing company: Constantinople became up for grabs, and Kurdistan was off the table. The Iraqis detested the idea of a British "mandate" for Iraq, handed out by the League of Nations, from whom Britain could obtain whatever mandate she wished. In spring 1920, Islamic secret societies plotted terrorism and revolt.

The Shia Arabs—Iraq's majority population—took up arms: Holy war was proclaimed from the famous city-shrines of Najaf and Karbala. The desert Bedouin rebelled; so did the Kurds of

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Michael Stenton is the author of Radio London and Resistance: Occupied Europe and British Political Warfare, 1939-43 *(Oxford University Press).*

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Mosul. Cheated of a united Kurdistan, they did not want Mosul given to Arab Iraq. (At that time, the Kurds and the Turks were companions in the slaughter of Armenian and Assyrian Christians.) The rebels were united but helpless. The British possessed the world's largest air force. Suppressing the 1920 revolt—shooting up camels and villages and lobbing gas bombs—was not very difficult. Ten thousand Iraqis were reported killed, scarcely five percent of the number killed in Desert Storm.

A hands-on attitude to Iraqi government was now less attractive; it was time for subtlety. In 1918, all the talk had been of nation-building, democracy, and progress. By 1921, it was *divide et impera* and forward to the past: deals with tribal chiefs, feudal tenures, nomads against townsfolk, Shia against Sunni, big landowners against landless laborers. Churchill, then colonial secretary, came out to Cairo to confer with Arabist Gertrude Bell and other experts. They decided to turn Iraq into a constitutional monarchy, with the promise that the mandate would end once Iraq was more mature and willing to stand up in Britain's favor. A suitable monarch was found: Prince Feisal ibn Hussein of the royal family of Mecca, the Hashemites.

Feisal had been Lawrence of Arabia's companion in arms. He had recently been proclaimed king of Syria by the Arabs but was promptly thrown out by the French, who also had a "mandate." The French were given a shrunken Syria so that Britain could keep the rest of it—Palestine and the Transjordan—as well as the oil-bearing Kurdish Mosul. Feisal had been humiliated, but the British thought well of him—rightly, as it turned out—and they decided he could rule Iraq instead of Syria. It was, at this stage, useful that Feisal had a reputation as a leader of the pan-Arab cause. There were elections of a sort, newspapers, and lots of governments: The political system was more open than anything Iraq has seen recently.

The other decision made at the fateful Cairo conference was to give Feisal an army of his own, as opposed to protection supplied from India steaming into Basra whenever the going got rough. This army would follow the same imperial convention the Turks had used in Iraq: a heavily Sunni officer corps for a largely Shia rank-and-file.

The mandate remained a political burden for the new regime; in 1929, the British pledged to drop it. But everything the British did contained escape clauses that rendered their best gestures useless or even provocative. There was also, of course, the oil. The Iraq Oil Company, derived from a pre-war Ottoman concession, was a front for British, French, and American companies. When the Iraqis asked for shares, they were given nothing. The Kirkuk reserves were proved in 1927, but large-scale production did not start until 1938, since the concession companies did not need the oil.

The mandate ended in 1932, but, in return, Iraq had to continue to host two British air bases and allow the British military free movement. Britain was powerful enough to force the hand of Iraqi governments. Political loyalty was steadily corroded by British refusal to stop Jewish immigration to Palestine. Britain attempted to control Palestine by making the withdrawal of her favor catastrophic for either side—an evil ruse that has commended itself to Washington in recent years. No Iraqi government could ignore pan-Arab feeling, which was becoming widespread, especially in the army.

King Feisal died in 1933, and his son lacked the skill to sustain his position. The result was a shrinking of executive authority. There was an army coup in 1936—the first outbreak of this plague in the modern Arab world—though the new boss was killed a year later. In 1938, the Kuwaiti assembly petitioned for union with Iraq, and there were riots when the sheik dissolved the assembly in haste. King Ghazi ibn Feisal prepared to invade Kuwait, but the plan was dropped when he was killed in an automobile crash. Rarely has one motorist killed so many people—53 years after he hit a tree.

In 1939, Iraq refused to declare war on Britain's enemies. When the Germans invaded Greece in 1941, Prime Minister Rashid Ali tried to refuse permission for Britain to increase the number of her troops in Iraq. He ended up laying siege to the RAF's Habbaniyah airfield while the Luftwaffe tried to fly in support. But the Iraqis were, as ever, helpless against airpower, and they were driven off by a handful of obsolescent machines. Once again, the British army took Baghdad; this time, however, every British expert warned that the long-term consequences did not bear thinking about. As British troops arrived, a pro-Nazi minority of Iraqis made murderous attacks on the world's oldest Jewish community.

After 1941, the Iraqi government was led by Nuri es-Said, a remarkably faithful anglophile of the 1916 generation of pan-Arabs. (A former Ottoman officer, he learned English in a POW camp in India and became a Hashemite advisor in 1916.) He was loyal to Britain through thick and thin. While Britain remained active, he survived, although Iraq was disturbed by riots in 1948 and 1952. But when Nuri es-Said took Iraq into a pro-Western defense club, his reward was Nasser's active enmity, and his position became fragile when the United States demolished British prestige in the Suez crisis.

In 1958, there was another army coup d'etat. This time, the king and the royal family were executed and strung up for public display. Nuri es-Said was caught fleeing Baghdad; his body was tied to a car and dragged until it fell to pieces. Britain's prestige had ebbed too far. Her future commitments would be small and strictly military. The monarchy had not been a one-dimensional façade, but its collapse was welcomed by the populace. *Here endeth the allegory.*

The new Iraqi republic tried to seize Kuwait in 1961, but the British turned up in sufficient force to keep them out. The Iraqis have always wanted Kuwait, and they do not understand why their claim should lapse simply because they renounce it whenever threatened with a big stick. Kuwait is small but, like Iraq, not entirely artificial. It has been autonomous since the early 18th century, and, before 1914, Ottoman authority was nominal. It is simply a jurisdiction for the one great natural harbor at the head of the Gulf, and not to have it is frustrating for the Iraqis, who lack anything but the smallest and most inconvenient strip of coast. It was once natural for Iraqis to believe that they could absorb Kuwait with something not far from consent, if only they could get rid of the Al Sabah ruling house.

The republican regime in Baghdad was an alliance between a military dictator and a communist party that was becoming the strongest force in the cities. The combination was potent but unstable, and it provoked army officers to another coup and the assassination of General Qasim in 1963. The replacement was the Ba'ath Party—pan-Arab socialists—who purged their rivals from the army. Both the party and army were now in the hands of a faction whose leading light was Saddam Hussein, the author of the dangerous Russo-Iraqi treaty of 1972. The risk was that the Iraqi communists, Moscow's favorites, would grow powerful as advocates of Kurdish and Shia rights.

The Iranian-Western response was to assist a Kurdish rebel-

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lion. It flourished until the shah cut off support in return for Saddam's concessions in the complicated but important dispute over navigation in the Shatt-el-Arab. Saddam then executed the communist leaders. He also reassessed his options when the shah was overthrown. As the Sunni boss of a largely Shia state, he suddenly felt vulnerable. He believed, however, that the revolution of the ayatollahs had destroyed the shah's army, and he invaded Iran, expecting swift victory. His war proved a disaster, and Iraq came close to total defeat; Saddam, however, was rearmed by the Russians and the French and backed by Washington. Neither the Americans nor the Saudis dared let him lose. There was minimal Western concern about Saddam's weapons when he used nerve gas against the Iranians and, later, the Kurds.

Saddam's mad gamble burdened Iraq with eight years of war debt and huge casualties. So he gambled again. Seizing Kuwait was a quick financial fix. Like the attack on Iran, it may have been encouraged by someone in Washington. The theory that Saddam was tricked, that the occupation and liberation of Kuwait was a ruse for establishing U.S. bases in Saudi Arabia, though plausible, remains a hypothesis. But Washington's apparent obsession today with Iraq's weapons is as instrumental as its apparent indifference before 1990.

There is now a broader purpose to this obsession: the legal-political attack on everyone else's right to military technology. U.S. policy in Iraq, despite its formal inconsistency, has successfully demonstrated that it is only with U.S. permission that a state wins battles or loses them and that it is only in the U.S. interest that a state is rearmed or disarmed. In this view, the United States has done well enough not to need to invade, and Washington still might not. But Saddam was a venomous opponent of the West: The fact that he had to be saved from Khomeini did not mean that he should ever be secure. Saddam was left in power in 1991 for reasons too murky to probe. The simplified version passed around was that the country would fall apart without a dictator, so Iraq had to become Saddam's prison cage. Today, however, all Arab regimes look disaffected; hence, regime change for the most vulnerable.

Acquiring Iraq by force as a client state would be a leap into the unknown. There will be no easy place to stop: The British spent 40 years marching toward the distant sound of failure. Even if Saddam could be replaced by someone as plausible as King Feisal, fear of American power would reach new levels of hysteria. Still, there must be an end to the prison-cage strategy. An invasion might be less cruel than another decade of bombing and blockade; then again, it might be worse.

King Feisal's Iraq was crippled by the British strategic presence, the greed of the oil companies, and the Zionist albatross. A U.S.-operated Iraq would be similarly burdened. Perhaps Iraqi society is so shattered and demoralized that the trends before 1980 toward socialism, sectarianism, and separatism have abated. After Saddam, will the Iraqis patiently line up for Western medicine like the Czechs, Hungarians, and Poles? Eastern Europeans endured something more than communism: They suffered a violation of their identities. Reintegration with Europe became a potent myth (hence their untypical submissiveness). The Iraqi equivalent of the reintegration dream is pan-Arabism, free Palestine, and Islam; the religious-cultural loyalties are mainly Shia. America could not get past stage one as the patron of a post-Saddam Iraq without adding Islamophilia to the p.c. cookbook and imposing a settlement for Palestine that would be punishingly difficult for Israel to accept.

Since this scenario is unlikely, we must wonder how serious the demand for regime change really is. A new set of scowling army officers would leave Iraq where it is, if that is what is wanted. Even if a friendly Iraq were available to the Western coalition that takes Baghdad, it would be expensive, wearing on the nerves, and unlikely to last. That sort of experiment was not desired in 1991. Back then, however, the United States thought it had friends in the region. After September 11, Washington may have wised up. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have betrayed America. Neither state, however, could be dealt with quickly, both were still needed, and there were no alternative regimes except worse ones. Threats, bribes, and India have kept Pakistan semicompliant: If more compliance were needed, Pakistan's nuclear weapon would become a weapon of mass destruction, which it seems not to be at present. The Iraq crisis makes sense as an exercise in indirect intimidation; it is as much about the future of Saudi Arabia as were the attacks on New York and Washington, D.C.

Deposing Saddam—by war or by the clinical use of threats—suggests an experiment in regime-*making*. It is worth considering what sort of experiment. Since 1921, Iraqi regimes have seemed largely a function of foreign policy. But foreign policy has been a gyrating weathercock. The Iraqi social structure has been pulled to pieces over and over again. The struggle for power is all-important, because the oil revenue flows into Aladdin's lamp: Whoever controls it wins the opportunity to generate the economy he wishes.

Iraq has the potential to be the leading Arab state in the region. As long as she threatens the Gulf and is threatened by Iran, however, she can find only trouble. With her Sunni elite minority, Iraq should have opted for a quiet life, but everything had to be sacrificed to Saddam's pursuit of glory. This is surely about to end. What is next? There are today enough educated Iraqi exiles for the United States to put together a ruling faction, perhaps a new ruling class. A conqueror could abolish the military hegemony of the Sunni officers. This would undo the mistake the British made long ago.

Yet civilian Sunni leadership would need constant Western protection. A new Shia leadership might be possible, but it would be less Westernized and might reconnect Iraq to the fate of her Iranian neighbor. A complete reversal of U.S. policy toward Iran would seem logical, but the need to betray Israel would then quickly grow, and, thus, it is unlikely. An American Iraq would, therefore, likely take the form of a Sunni regime reinforced and disguised by an Islamicized political correctness directed at the Saudis, the Iranians, and local *mujahideen*. If it could deliver peace and relative economic success, this regime might work in the short term. Unless the anti-Americanism of the Arab world dissolves in the next decade, however, it would be a rough ride. Iraqis are the best-educated people in the region: If any Arab economy can succeed, theirs can. Implicit in an American protectorate, however, would be a gamble on an economic transformation so steep and radical that it would remake society. Once in Baghdad, only excess can succeed.

The chances of failure are more obvious than the prospect of success. The attempt, however, can run and run. As the British found, power in Jerusalem, Baghdad, and Cairo, and access to all of the oil, is a great lure. Since there is almost certainly no existing grand project, the empty minds will fill with something. At the heart of imperialism, new or old, is the dangerous partnership of cynicism and imagination. c

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The Justification for War

It's the Oil (and the Power, and Israel), Stupid

by Srdja Trifkovic

H. Ward Sterett

During the Cold War, occasional resorts to war or threats of war by the United States were justified by the need to keep communism in check. This justification had the advantage of being based on a real threat—notably in Berlin in 1949, in Korea in 1950, and during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. The result was a degree of clarity and honesty: We were going to fight not only because we were virtuous upholders of the law of nations, or defenders of the Free World, but primarily because it was in our geopolitical interest to do so.

The old urge to cloak the use of American military power in missionary righteousness returned after the fall of the Soviet Union. James Baker's frank statement—that the Gulf War was all about oil—was contradicted by President George H.W. Bush, who preferred to speak of a moral action against Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. Clinton's interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo were likewise presented in "humanitarian" terms, but Richard Holbrooke subsequently boasted that the real reason was global hegemony: "We are re-engaged in the world, and Bosnia was the test."

The attack on Iraq seems imminent some time in 2003, and the gap between the stated reasons for that war and the underlying motives of the decisionmaking community in Washington seems wider than ever. As the *Washington Times* noted last August, "the Bush administration began by making plans to get rid of Saddam Hussein, and realized only later that it might need to explain why . . . It is still groping for a good excuse."

That groping has produced a string of unconvincing reasons for attack. The earliest was terrorism. Various stories of contacts between Iraq and Al Qaeda all proved false, however. The "moral case" for war has also been advanced, notably by National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice and by the British government. This led some to question whether other regimes whose human-rights abuses are on par with Saddam's—notably in Saudi Arabia, North Korea, Sudan, Mauritania, as well as any number of sub-Saharan despotisms—would also be targeted.

Uncomfortable with such implications, the proponents of war eventually focused on the claim that Iraq has, or may be acquiring, "weapons of mass destruction." Vice President Dick Cheney even said that Saddam Hussein poses a "mortal threat" to the United States. The intelligence community came under intense pressure to produce support for such assertions, but the evidence is still missing. Initial U.N. inspections in November and December 2002 did not support the claims. President Bush's decision in November to seek U.N. approval for his plans drew America even further away from a real debate on the pros and cons of the war. The bottom line is that war with Iraq either is justified on the grounds of this country's well-being and security or it is not. To make such a determination, the United States has no need of the United Nations or its Security Council. By going through the world body, the Bush team bypasses the crucial issue of U.S. national interests.

Since none of the stated reasons can withstand critical scrutiny, the question of the Bush administration's likely true motives needs to be addressed. Outside the United States, numerous mainstream commentators maintain that the Iraqi crisis cannot be separated from three factors: the dream of America's multinational corporations to secure control of Middle Eastern oil reserves, the desire to exercise global hegemony, and the influence of Israel and her friends.

Regarding oil, the *Times* of London explained on July 11, 2002, that an American victory "would open Iraq's rich new oilfields to Western bidders and bring the prospect of lessening dependence on Saudi oil. No other country offers such untapped oilfields . . . Iraq's proven reserves of 112 billion barrels are sec-

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ond only to Saudi Arabia's 256 billion barrels." The windfall could be even greater: Oil-industry experts estimate the reserves to be over 200 billion barrels, concentrated primarily in the three huge oil fields in the south—Majnoon, West Kurna, and Nahr Umar—each of which exceeds the reserves of Kuwait. As an expert told the *Times*, "There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world. It's the big prize."

This bonanza for American oil companies long banished from Iraq would have the additional advantage of undermining the strong position of Russia's Lukoil and France's Total-Fina-Elf in Iraq's oil production. Former CIA director James Woolsey bluntly declared last summer that France and Russia "should be told that if they are of assistance in moving Iraq toward decent government, we'll do the best we can to ensure that the new government and American companies work closely with them." Otherwise, he warned, "it will be difficult to the point of impossible to persuade the new Iraqi government to work with them." Since "the new Iraqi government" will be roughly as independent as that of Mr. Kharzai's in Kabul, Iraq's oil would become a U.S. asset and quite possibly be used to offset the costs of waging war against her.

> We are being driven into a potential quagmire, and no real questions are being asked. What started, in October 2001, as a legitimate military response to terrorist attacks has degenerated into an hubristic powerplay that may engage the United States in an open-ended war against a large segment of the Muslim world.

Glutting the market with huge quantities of easily extractable Iraqi oil in early 2004 would reduce energy costs and boost economic recovery in the run-up to the presidential election later that year. Paying under a dollar per gallon of unleaded would be a tangible benefit of Mr. Bush's policy that millions of Americans would remember and appreciate every day. American control of Iraqi oil would also make a mockery of OPEC and very painfully demonstrate to the Saudis that their clout is spent. The ensuing mutual violation of production quotas possibly would destroy the cartel or render it ineffective for years. Last, but by no means least, Russia's oil revenues would take a hit at a time when modest economic recovery is under way, making planned exploration of new wells in Siberia uneconomical.

The second real reason for the war is the pursuit of a global empire in which the United States would finally be acknowledged as the indisputable planetary sheriff, judge, and jury. A careful reading of President Bush's National Security Strategy, unveiled last September, presents the specter of open-ended political, military, and economic domination of the globe by the United States. The men and women who form the nucleus of the President's team formulated all the key elements of this strategy years ago, but September 11 made its execution possible.

The strategy defines two main categories of enemies: "rogue states" and "potentially hostile powers." Both warrant preemptive strikes "by direct and continuous action using all the elements of national and international power . . . We will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting pre-emptively." The United States not only will confront "evil and lawless regimes" but will put an end to "destructive national rivalries." To that end, the administration "intends to keep military strength beyond challenge, thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace." Iraq is the ideal test case of the new doctrine. She has already been named a "rogue state" countless times, and she is weak and friendless.

An attack on Iraq would resolve a key requirement of the National Security Strategy: a drastic expansion of overseas military commitments. "The United States will require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia, as well as temporary access arrangements for the long-distance deployment of U.S. troops." Conquering Iraq offers the chance to seize those "bases and stations" in an all-important region. Strenuous negotiations in the closing months of 2002 with Saudi Arabia and Turkey about the use of military facilities in those countries (including a substantial bribe promised to the Turks for providing the key air base at Incirlik) must have confirmed to the Bush team that the United States should acquire bases in the Middle East that would be under direct U.S. control, not subject to the political whim of the host government. "The new Iraqi government," whatever its shape, is bound to be willing to oblige.

With a 99-year lease on the port of Basra and the air base at Mosul, and a string of garrisons guarding the oil fields, the Bush administration would make a giant leap forward in implementing the key requirement of the National Security Strategy. Iran, Syria, and Saudi Arabia would all be intimidated by the presence of GIs on their borders. At least in Syria's case, things could easily go beyond intimidation if Damascus does not pull out of Lebanon and allow Israel to settle her scores with Hezbollah. (What will happen to the Palestinians in these proceedings is not too difficult to imagine.) The next cakewalk could be Axis of Evil member Iran, by then surrounded by U.S. power. Be on the lookout for the suggestion that the War on Terror cannot be declared over until Tripoli has been taken, too.

The main long-term benefactor from a series of wars between America and assorted Muslim countries would be Israel, the third real reason for the war against Iraq. Ever since the Six Day War enhanced the special relationship between Israel and the United States, Israeli governments have been trying to coax the United States into war against the Arabs and Iran. This was a perfectly rational strategy from the Israeli point of view: If successful, it would permanently bind the richest and most powerful country in the world to its "only reliable Middle Eastern al-

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ly." It would also deepen the schism between the United States and the Muslim world and make it equally permanent. The War Party is unwilling to acknowledge this motive, but Gen. Wesley Clark, former NATO supreme allied commander, let the cat out of the bag last August: "Those who favor this attack now tell you candidly, and privately, that it is probably true that Saddam Hussein is no threat to the United States. But they are afraid at some point he might decide if he had a nuclear weapon to use it against Israel."

The friends of Israel in the policymaking community in Washington do not see the fall of Saddam as the end of their assignment. They are contemplating a thorough reconstruction of the Middle Eastern political architecture to take advantage of latent tensions among antagonistic ethnic and religious groups. *Balkanization* is the word that best describes their intent. A weakened, divided Iraq would greatly enhance the position of Israel *vis-à-vis* its largely hostile environment. The fact that Iraq is not a monoethnic and monodenominational nation gives rise to interesting possibilities, which may explain the curious absence of public statements from Washington on U.S. intentions following Saddam's downfall. Regional experts suspect that the United States would be content to see Iraq effectively broken into three areas: the heartland, focused on a Baghdad controlled by Sunni Muslims; the marshlands of the south, where Shiite Muslims are in the majority; and the northern third of the country, where the Kurdish minority already exercises *de facto* autonomy. (That the oil fields would remain under direct U.S. control hardly needs stating.)

None of these entities would be allowed meaningful self-rule, however. The establishment of a full-fledged Kurdish ministate in northern Iraq would not be allowed, because Turkey, which has had problems with her own restive Kurdish minority for decades, greatly fears that scenario. As the *New York Times* reported last August, "Turkish officials have warned that they are prepared to go to war to prevent the Iraqi Kurds from declaring a kind of mini-Kurdish state within Iraq."

On the southern flank, the Shiites, if they were to declare their own autonomous statelet, would naturally gravitate toward their coreligionists in Iran. The friends of Israel inside the Beltway would thus be provided with the pretext to demand a preemptive U.S. strike against Tehran. We would soon be reminded that Iran, too, is part of the Axis of Evil, that she supports terrorism, and that she has weapons of mass destruction.

We are being driven into a potential quagmire, and no real questions are being asked. What started, in October 2001, as a legitimate military response to terrorist attacks has degenerated into an hubristic powerplay that may engage the United States in an open-ended war against a large segment of the Muslim world. To grab Iraq's oil is no substitute for devising an energy policy that would free the United States from her dependence on Muslim-controlled fossil fuels once and for all. To use the war on Iraq as a stepping-stone on the road to a global American empire is mad, evil, and, ultimately, self-defeating. To wage war in order to pursue the agenda of another country is absurd.

If it can be established beyond all reasonable doubt that the regime in Iraq means ill to the United States and has the wherewithal to pursue its malevolent design, then let us have this war. Anything short of that yardstick is mendacity designed to deceive the American people and to advance the ambitions of certain groups whose interests should not be equated with those of the nation as a whole. c

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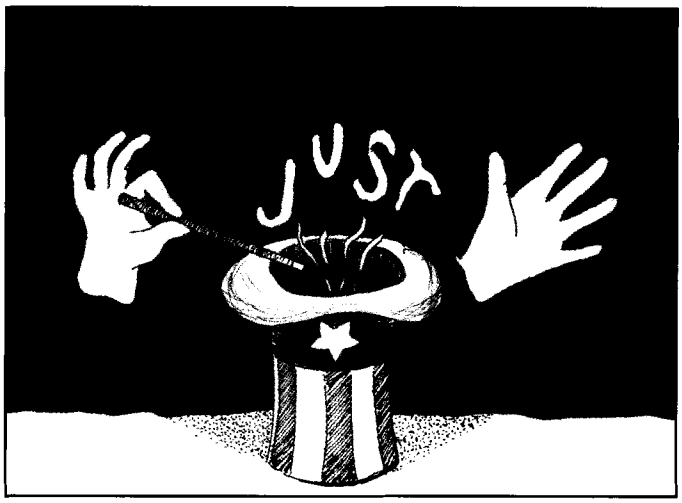
Just War or Just Another War?

Jus in Iraq

by Thomas Ryba



H. Ward Sterett

Political experts are certain that war with Iraq is on the horizon, though there is some disagreement about how distant that horizon might be. The way the Bush administration and media pundits invoke the words "justice" and "just war" without actually calling attention to the historical criteria for a just war has been disconcerting. The apparent strategy is to saturate the airwaves with these and related phrases, to apply them loosely, and to trade on their different historical loadings, in order to justify present actions even when those historical meanings do not apply.

A large part of this misappropriation is connected with a phenomenon I would call the occult transference of virtue, an ideological false-consciousness by which the administration (secure in its righteousness) believes that its moral virtue is preternaturally transferable to all of its endeavors, no matter how bellicose. This magical transference of virtue finds its complement in the desperate need of many Americans after September 11 to personify their enemy. Osama bin Laden has been elusive. We need something accessible, concrete, and personal upon which to focus our resolve and to vent our indignation and righteousness, especially when both are so easily dissipated by a covert war conducted against a rhizomic terrorist network. Not psychologically prepared to fight a just war against postmodern political realities, we find it easier to fight a war of dubious justice against a familiar 20th-century-style dictatorship, even if that victory will have minimal impact upon Al Qaeda.

A truthful evaluation of the imminent war with Iraq requires an understanding of what just war really entails. The concept originated in Europe as a theory closely tied to issues of war, peace, order, and charity as formulated in Christian—specifically, Roman Catholic—moral theology. There have been other theological formulations of just war in the West—both the Judaic and Islamic traditions have proposed versions—but these have not been primary influences on any political theory of war nor on international law. Christian just-war theory has undergone four stages of development: the Augustinian, the Thomist, the Vitorian/Suarezian, and its most recent formulation, promulgated by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Saint Augustine is generally credited as the originator of the first theological theory of just war in the West. There is no single place where he formulated it fully, but aspects of it are spread across the Augustinian corpus in such works as *On Christian Doctrine*, the *City of God*, *On the Free Choice of the Will*, various epistles, and *Against Faustus*. Augustine championed three criteria as characterizing a just war: First, it must be waged by a proper authority or public officials representing the good of the people; second, it must have a just cause or be waged out of "charity"—that is, it must be elicited by the charitable and self-sacrificial protection of the group whose lives and order have been threatened; and third, it can only be waged for the purpose of keeping the peace or restoring public harmony. Augustine believed that just purpose is negated if evil passions prevail and charitable self-sacrifice and the just end are forgotten. Atrocities committed in the heat of battle are morally damnable and, as such, sufficient to negate the justice of the war. In Augustine's formulation, the personal rectitude of the combatants is inseparably intertwined with the justice of the cause.

St. Thomas Aquinas, unlike Augustine, does not think that

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the savagery of soldiers necessarily negates the legitimacy of just intention, since the intention is properly related to competent authority. Foot soldiers and their sinful passions are not the *kinetic* cause of the conflict but function as instruments at the service of the just will of a competent authority. Even so, they are morally culpable and temporally punishable for their less-than-defensive behavior.

During the Counter-Reformation, two theologians of the Salamanca school, Francisco de Vitoria and Francisco de Suárez, expanded the theological model of just war. The historical context for these additions was complicated. It included the colonial aspirations of the European powers and the experience of the preceding two centuries of bloody war, as well as an idealistic hope for the eventual establishment of world government. Both Vitoria and Suárez were among the earliest visionaries of one-world government and the establishment of a code of international law.

Vitoria and Suárez added two new criteria: First, a just war must be fought only as a last resort, after all other avenues of diplomacy have been exhausted; and, second—as a correction to Thomas's theory—a just war must be prosecuted properly, recognizing that, even if the evil intentions of the common soldier could not be controlled, his actions could be. Also, just war must not produce a greater evil than the conflict that it was fought to correct.

In the last century, Pius XII (*Function of the State in the Modern World*, 1939, and *Christmas Message*, 1944), John XXIII (*Peace on Earth*, 1963), Vatican II (*The Church in the Modern World*, 1965), Paul VI (*Development of Peoples*, 1967), and John Paul II (*Disarmament*, 1988, and *Gospel of Life*, 1995) added to the earlier formulations a series of qualifications based on the experience of two world wars and numerous "police actions." Among the moral qualifications that emerged from the experience of 20th-century war were the unconditional condemnation of total war, the unconditional denial of any state's claim to a right to wage war, the unconditional denial of the justice of any war of aggression (and the questioning of all claims to preemption), the unconditional denial of wars of subjugation, the necessity of an international authority with the power to adjudicate international disputes, and, finally, the primacy of negotiated settlements, with just war reserved as a last resort.

On the basis of these teachings, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (*The Challenge of Peace*, 1988) further expanded the classical model, adding "relative justice," or the recognition that the party justly prosecuting war cannot claim absolute righteousness in the cause but has to recognize that the offending party also possesses just claims that must, eventually, be addressed. They also added the criterion of proportionate results—a kind of cost-benefit analysis that prohibits any conflict in which the righting of wrong is won at too dear a measure of either lives lost or the diminution of the quality of life. This is connected to a final criterion: the reasonable hope for success, stipulating that entry into a war that is probably interminable (or unlikely to be won) should be avoided. The bishops distinguished these *ad bellum* (going to war) criteria from two additional *in bello* (in war) criteria: first, the discrimination of noncombatants and dire consequences; and, second, the reckoning of proportionate results at all points in the conflict.

The classic Roman Catholic model—chiefly in its Vitorian and Augustinian forms—directly shaped the development of international law in Dutch Arminian Hugo Grotius' *Law of War and Peace* (1625). Grotius freely simplified the idealistic precepts of the model to make them fit the self-interest of nations. The results of this adaptation can be found in the language of the charter of the United Nations and that of the Geneva Accords.

Just war is only one theory about the conditions under which war may be waged. Radical pacifists consider the notion of just war sufficiently oxymoronic to place it among the ranks of such other apparent contradictions as no-fault divorce, political correctness, socialist economics, and postmodern philosophy.

Radical pacifism itself, however, is merely an extreme on the spectrum of possible positions. In any civilized political system, the opposite of pacifism is *war realism*. In contrast to the radical pacifist stance, which allows war under no circumstances, war realism stops short of war barbarism by limiting the ongoing prosecution of war while remaining interventionist in the extreme. Just-war theory falls between the fuzzy borders of pacifist theory and war-realist theory.

In their moral or theological formulations, each variety of *théorie de guerre* is coupled with a theory of value complementary to it. Generally, pacifist approaches are absolutist with respect to the sanctity of life, while war-realist approaches are utilitarian and consequentialist in the extreme, often subordinating the shedding of blood—according to some cost-benefit calculus—to political and material gains. A state's adoption of war realism as part of its foreign policy can be a symptom of a totalitarian turn that diminishes the value of individual lives and rights. Just-war theories are more complicated than pacifist and war-realist theories and are usually connected to a hierarchy of values grounded in natural law, while retaining a cost-benefit analysis negotiated in terms of the values of that hierarchy.

In the real world, a moral asymmetry lies at the heart of the political theory of just war. When two nations go to war with each other, it may well be that neither recognizes natural law or a common moral standard, or that one recognizes natural law and the other does not. Under such circumstances, there is no basis for the administration of justice in the midst of the conflict. In the case of two belligerents without common law or morals, the conflict may be interminable, or vastly superior technology possessed by one may mean the annihilation of the other.

The moral asymmetry of nations going to war was one of the implicit theoretical and historical reasons for the establishment of international law. A system of positive laws is required as a guarantor and common standard of justice. International law, especially as it defends sovereign right, has been designed to protect the self-interest of states (without which no state would submit to such regulation), but any such system must back its laws with some means of enforcement. Historically, however, when the moral-theological theory of just war appeared to frustrate the legitimate exercise of a state's power on the international scene or to interfere in the domestic affairs of the state, it was deemed repugnant. The political theory of just war arose as a compromise. In contemporary discourse, however, much confusion is caused by the collision of two notions of just war—one highly theological and idealistic and the other fundamentally political and practical.

According to the moral theory of just war, the injustice done to the innocent under a tyrannical political regime may be just as worthy of consideration as grounds for war as the injustice done to those outside of it. Once just war is subordinated to natural-law criteria, the option of interventionist actions becomes viable, providing the other criteria are met. Generally, it is in-

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ternational law, not natural law, that discourages these interventions according to a narrow application of the symmetry of consequences. "Do unto others what you would have done unto you" is interpreted here as "Don't meddle in the internal affairs of other nations unless you wish them to meddle in your affairs." This application promotes a dim view of regime change. Natural law expands the same principal according to universal values. From the point of view of natural law, as long as interventionism is just in its defense of the innocent (and it meets the other criteria of just war), it should be attempted. A moment's reflection is sufficient to remind us of the many ways in which the political and moral theories of just war have collided. Think of some of the historical circumstances in which there was a moral clarion call to intervene in the affairs of other states. Stalinist Russia, the holocaust, Pol Pot's regime in Cambodia, and the gassing of the Kurds in Iraq were real occasions for outside interference in the domestic affairs of barbaric states, but intervention was ultimately prevented or limited by political considerations beyond innocence and justice as defined by natural law.

The theoretical divorce between the moral and the political is a distinction that has not led to greater clarity in thinking about the conditions for war—quite the opposite. And yet, it is difficult to imagine all of the nations of the world accepting a common moral standard short of the emergence of a world civilization. Thus, we must negotiate the rhetoric of just war with the distinctions and standards we already possesses.

Would the impending war against Iraq be a just war? The answer would be partly determined by information we simply do not have. As citizens of the United States, we elect representatives who have access to the required information and who will ultimately make the decision for us. Two better questions are, Given what we know about how they are making their decision, is this a just war?; and, second, Are they using just-war criteria to make the decision to go to war? I think the answer has to be "no" on both accounts.

As a Roman Catholic, according to the teachings of the Church, I have two options: pacifism and just-war theory, the two historical positions of the Church on issues of war and peace. For Catholics, war realism is not an option, nor are the purely political interpretations of any of the theories.

Taking the theological criteria, then, it would seem that the Bush administration's proposed war with Iraq would be disqualified on a number of grounds, even though Saddam Hussein's barbaric treatment of his people and his threat to neighboring states and Israel would seem to constitute just cause. According to the political theory of just war, the mistreatment of citizens does not necessarily constitute grounds for war; the moral theory, however, is more idealistic on this point and thus more interventionist. The difficulty with respect to the criterion of self-defense is that neither the political nor the theological theory can accept intention as cause. Until Hussein's direct involvement with Al Qaeda can be established, it is impossible to see action against Saddam as really defensive.

About competent authority there can be little argument. No one seriously doubts that this administration has the support of the Congress, allied nations, and the United Nations to wage war under prescribed conditions. And, except for a few disgruntled Gore supporters, no one questions this administration's duly constituted authority.

With respect to proper intention, the issue is more complicated. The Christian must ask himself whether self-defense, the defense of allies, and the protection of innocent lives really constitute the aims of this war. Strategic advantage and oil may also play a role, and, given the obvious preemptive nature of the war, we can only wonder whether it is being driven by the latter concerns and not by any real threat. The political theory of just war allows the complication of intentions and mixed motives so long as defense is primary. Still, preemptive strikes have been judged unjust or questionable when the threat is not "clear and present." (An example is Israel's preemptive raid on Hussein's Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981.) The moral theory does not allow for much complication and—in general—takes a dim view of preemptive strikes, viewing them usually as acts of aggression. The ability to apply the criteria of just war is radically curtailed by what may be called the temporal horizon of the circumstances, the unpredictability of future possibilities. The criteria are easiest to apply when there is a "clear and present danger." They are most difficult to apply when the temporal horizon is distant and where the intentionality of the opponent is difficult to assess. In the present circumstances, there would seem to be no clear and present danger that would warrant a preemptive attack on the part of the United States. As of yet, we have seen no "smoking rocket," as one pundit recently put it.

Military intelligence is of central importance when considering whether proportionate results will be achieved. Without access to the battle plans and the measures that will be undertaken to neutralize weapons of mass destruction, it is difficult for a citizen to apply this criterion, especially since its clarity might only be bought at the expense of many American lives. On the other hand, in the absence of this information, citizens have no way of knowing whether the costs have been counted recklessly or disingenuously.

As to a reasonable hope of success, no one seriously believes that the United States does not have the ability to prosecute the war against Iraq effectively, but effective victory does not dissolve objections based on the other criteria.

Finally and most importantly, it is clear that the U.S. war against Iraq can hardly be considered a last resort, either according to the political or the moral interpretation of just war, and this criterion is especially damning of the current U.S. *ad bellum* strategy. On this, a cloud of witnesses—many of them unlikely associates—are in agreement. Robert Harris, Rowan Williams, Michael Howard, Gen. Wesley Clark, Brent Scowcroft, Lawrence Eagleburger, Arlen Specter, Amr Moussa, and former president Jimmy Carter have denied any imminent threat or last resort. The strategy of containment and deterrence has not proved bankrupt, nor has the United States exhausted all of its diplomatic or military options. The Bush administration seems intent on engineering a last resort by using Iraq's noncompliance with U.N. resolutions as a pretext for invasion, but war is not necessarily the only possible retaliatory action.

By the time this piece is published, we may be at war. In the intervening weeks, the Bush administration may have effectively dissolved all objections that make its war against Iraq politically and morally unjust. Many of the objections I have raised are based on the inaccessibility of information—information that either exists and is being withheld for purposes of security or does not exist and, thus, damns the injustice of the war with Iraq. However, if we *are* at war with Iraq and that war is unjust, there is still nothing that prevents the administration from limiting the use of force to the *in bello* criteria, thus making this war more just in its execution than it was in its inception. c

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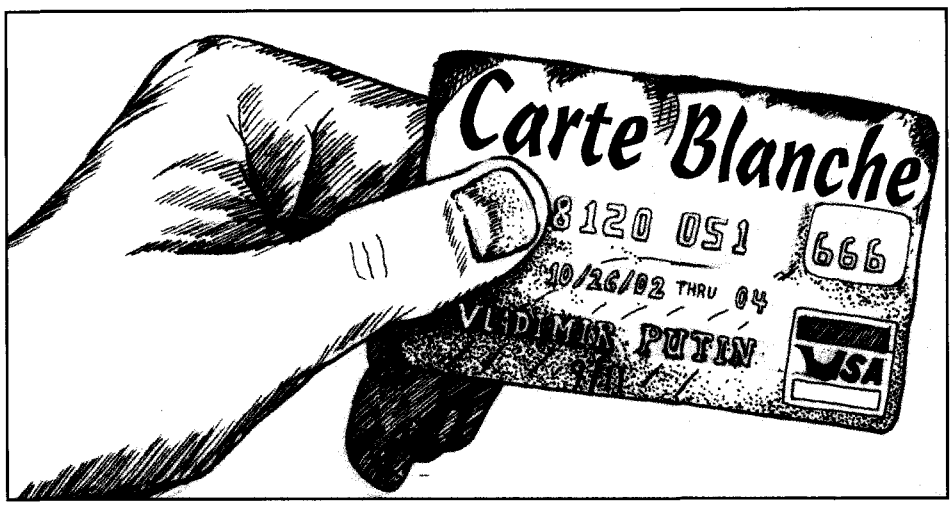
Giving Up Saddam

Russia and "Regime Change" in Iraq

by Wayne Allensworth



H. Ward Sterett

From October 23 to October 26, 2002, all of Russia—and much of the world—was focused on the Dubrovka theater complex in Moscow. A band of Chechen terrorists had seized the complex during a performance of the popular musical *Nord Ost*, holding a group of about 750 hostages captive as the band's leader, Movsar Barayev, nephew of a Chechen field commander killed by Russian forces, demanded that President Vladimir Putin order the withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya. The terrorists initially released some hostages, while a series of Russian luminaries attempted to negotiate the release of others, eventually persuading the captors to allow doctors into the theater to treat the ailing and the elderly. Meanwhile, official sources claimed that the terrorists had threatened to begin shooting the hostages on the morning of the 26th if the authorities did not respond to their demands.

The crisis ended in the deadly storming of the theater by Russian Special Forces on the 26th and the death of the terrorists—as well as of at least 128 hostages, who fell victim to the "knockout gas" used to disable the terrorists before the assault. Kremlin spokesmen quickly tied the Moscow crisis to a series of recent terrorist acts around the world, claiming, once again, that the war in the breakaway Chechen republic was part of the global "War on Terror" that U.S. President George W. Bush had declared after the September 11 attacks. The subsequent release of an audiotape, which most experts believed to be a statement by Osama bin Laden, seemed to confirm that: The tape hailed the attack in Moscow as part of a global *jihad* against the "enemies of Islam."

Putin's Kremlin had lobbied the Western powers, especially the United States, to include Chechnya as a legitimate theater in the War on Terror, having pledged Moscow's support for the U.S. military's attack on Afghanistan as well as a general attack on global Islamic terrorist networks. The White House had already muted criticism of the Chechen "antiterrorist operation" (as Moscow's official spokesman dubbed the war) but had continued to call for a "political solution" to the Chechen problem. This time, however, the administration seemed to respond: By mid-November, Moscow was expecting Washington to include Chechen lobbying groups in the West on its list of terrorist organizations, while Washington appeared to signal that it would no longer pressure the Kremlin to conduct talks with Chechen insurgents.

The signals were timely: On November 8, Moscow had voted to accept a compromise resolution on arms inspections in Iraq. The latest version of the Iraq resolution hammered out by Washington, Moscow, and Paris (France had also been a particularly outspoken holdout) seemed to ensure that the Bush administration would at least go through the motions of consulting with the U.N. Security Council before launching an assault on Baghdad. A team of U.N. inspectors would determine whether Iraq was complying with the resolution. In theory, at least, the United States could not attack Iraq without any U.N. involvement (though, if a "serious" violation of the resolution occurred, Washington threatened to act without waiting for the Security Council's approval).

It had been clear from the outset that Moscow was not primarily interested in international law or the United Nations' role in sanctioning a war: Moscow simply desired to carry out the "antiterrorist" operation in Chechnya unhindered and to defend Russian economic interests in Central Asia, the Caspian Sea/Trans-Caucasus, and the Middle East. Throughout October and November, Russian media had reported that Moscow was ready to "give up" Saddam Hussein in exchange for Washington agreeing to protect contracts secured by Russian oil firms to develop Iraq's oil reserves. (Iraq has the second-largest known oil reserves in the world.) Especially important to

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Moscow was the position of Lukoil, a largely state-owned company that had secured a contract (offered by Baghdad in the late 1990's in an effort to win Russian support for lifting economic sanctions on Iraq) to develop Iraq's promising West Kurna oil field. Most Moscow observers had taken a statement by ex-CIA director James Woolsey that U.S. companies and a post-Saddam government would work "side by side" with Russian firms, should Moscow help to push Baghdad toward a "decent form of government," as a signal that the Bush administration was ready to bargain.

The Kremlin and Russian oil interests had reportedly been contemplating the possible benefits of "regime change" in Baghdad for some time, even as Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov publicly defended Baghdad and Russian firms profited from the U.N.-sponsored "oil for food" program. Iraq owes Russia about seven billion dollars, and repayment has been seriously hindered by economic sanctions. Russian media have reported that the Kremlin is increasingly concerned about projected budget shortfalls, with parliamentary and presidential elections (in 2003 and 2004, respectively) on the horizon. Moreover, Putin had been promising pay hikes for the military and public-sector workers as well as pension increases for Russia's growing legion of retirees. Clearly, the sanctions would not be lifted, and the Americans would find a way to replace Saddam Hussein, with or without Russian help. Thus, Russian oil firms were eager to develop the Iraqi oil deposits, which would help fill Russian budget coffers and aid Putin's reelection campaign. Moscow was increasingly frustrated by the sanctions as well as by the Iraqis: The cumbersome Iraqi bureaucracy was reportedly hindering their exploration and development efforts. Some key players in the Kremlin and in Russia's oil sector began to wonder whether regime change, if it came about under suitable conditions for Russia, might not be such a bad thing.

Russia's relationship with Iraq was an outgrowth of the Soviet Union's efforts to counter American influence in the Middle East. In the early 1950's, Stalin, after recognizing a newly established Israel in 1948, increasingly viewed the Jewish state as an American satellite. The Soviet dictator had sought a foothold in the Middle East since the end of World War II. As the United States strengthened its ties with Israel and expanded its influence in Iran, Moscow reoriented itself toward the Arab states, and military advisors and technicians from the Soviet Union and Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe trained Arab military personnel, while the Kremlin provided economic-development aid and equipped the Arab states' armed forces. By the mid-1960's, the Soviets had settled into the Middle East as a supplier of military hardware and technology to the Arab states as well as of training, education, and technical expertise. Moscow suffered setbacks, however, as Arab forces were defeated in the 1967 Six Day War, the United States increased its influence among "moderate" Arab states, and Washington backed Iraq during its war with revolutionary Iran in the 1980's.

Ironically, American efforts to undercut Soviet influence on Saddam Hussein make the United States a likely source of the "weapons of mass destruction" about which Washington became so concerned following the Gulf War—and which helped to bring about the horse-trading with Moscow over the November 2002 U.N. resolution on weapons inspections.

Though the United States provided support to both sides in the Iran-Iraq war, most U.S. support went to Iraq, since an Islamic regime in Tehran was considered the larger threat to U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf. American companies reportedly exported biological and chemical agents that could be used to develop weapons, including "weaponized" anthrax. (Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, one former U.N. weapons inspector claimed that Iraqi officials had admitted to him that they had used anthrax strains purchased from an American company to develop biological weapons.) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also reportedly sent samples of various germs, including anthrax and West Nile virus, to sites in Iraq later identified by U.N. weapons inspectors as part of the Iraqi weapons program. According to American media sources, these exports continued until about November 1989, in spite of reports that Iraq was using chemical and biological warfare against both the Iranians and the Kurds.

At the same time, U.S. companies supplied Iraq with electronic hardware and other equipment that could be used to develop and manufacture nuclear weapons and delivery systems, including missiles. Specialized computers exported to Iraq, for example, could be used to simulate nuclear testing, avoiding easily detectable nuclear blasts. Baghdad, which had previously relied on Moscow for its conventional military hardware, also began purchasing U.S. military equipment during the 1980's.

The collapse of the Soviet Union further diminished Moscow's influence in the region. In the Middle East, Moscow was perceived as an undesirable partner. It was clear that post-Soviet Russia—impoverished, technically backward (something that had been demonstrated as early as the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, when Western-armed Israeli units defeated the Soviet-equipped Arabs in less than a week), and distracted by her own internal problems—was not the superpower that the Soviet Union had been. Perhaps equally important to former Arab client states, Moscow was now demanding hard cash for military equipment (Soviet-era military hardware was in need of modernization, and some was simply obsolete) and for training and educating Arab military officers, scientists, and technicians. This provided an opening for ex-Soviet republics, including Belarus and Ukraine, both of which have been accused of selling military hardware to Iraq in violation of U.N. sanctions. The former Soviet states, for instance, offered to modernize older Soviet equipment for far less cash than the Russians were demanding.

By the time Boris Yeltsin resigned in December 1999 and Putin took office, Russia had three remaining venues in the Middle East through which to reassert herself as a great power and protect her economic interests: Iraq, where Moscow wanted to defend its oil interests (and Baghdad has seen Moscow as a counterbalance to Washington); Iran, still largely isolated from the West, where Russia became a source of arms, nuclear know-how, and technical assistance; and in the Arab-Israeli conflict, where Moscow, still welcomed by the Palestinian leadership, insisted on playing a role.

September 11 gave Russia a chance to play superpower once more: Washington needed Russian help in mounting its military operations in Central Asia, particularly in sharing intelligence on Afghanistan (apart from the Soviet war in the 1980's, Russia had backed the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance) as well as in securing airspace for American jets. Convinced that the Bush administration would act with or without Moscow's help, Putin played the "terrorist" card—his only strong one in an otherwise weak Russian hand. At the same time, the Kremlin was looking ahead to postwar scenarios in Central Asia, the Trans-Caucasus and Caspian Basin, and the Middle East. Moscow was certain that Washington would not be economically disin-

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terested in several theaters of a projected "war" that offered access to Central Asian and Caspian oil and gas deposits and the Iraqi oil reserves. (The Kremlin had anticipated that President Bush would use the War on Terror to settle the score with his father's nemesis.)

Last fall's mini-crisis over the Republic of Georgia shows how Moscow has played its hand. American policymakers have used the antiterrorist campaign as a pretext for stepping up U.S. intervention in the Trans-Caucasus republic. Washington, for example, recently sent military personnel to Georgia to "train and equip" Tbilisi's military forces as part of an effort to combat Chechen insurgents allegedly linked to bin Laden's terrorist network in Georgia's Pankisi Gorge region. (Bin Laden himself was, at one point, even rumored to be hiding out in Georgia.) Washington also appeared to be concerned with propping up the regime of ex-Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze. The Kremlin did not object, to the surprise of many Moscow pundits and the apparent irritation of some within the Russian military. Putin, as part of his effort to win Western approval of his war in Chechnya, had repeatedly claimed that the Chechen insurgents—some of whom had been trained in Afghanistan—were using Georgia as a base to launch operations against Russian forces in Chechnya. Washington thus cast the American presence in Georgia as simply another part of the antiterrorist campaign. Meanwhile, Putin's Kremlin waited for the right opportunity to use its influence in Georgia to gain some concession from the Americans.

Washington's shift in focus from Afghanistan to Iraq—coupled with Tbilisi's apparent reluctance to act in the Pankisi Gorge—gave Moscow the opportunity it was seeking. Washington needed Moscow's backing at the United Nations and wanted Russian support—or, at least, only a formal protest—in the event of war. With the Iraq crisis brewing and Washington mounting a public-relations campaign to justify a potential assault on Baghdad, Moscow threatened Georgia with war. On the first anniversary of September 11, Putin warned: "If the Georgian leadership cannot create a security zone in the regions of the Georgian-Russian border" (Pankisi Gorge borders Russian territory) "and does not put an end to bandit sorties and attacks on contiguous regions of Russia," then Moscow "reserves the right to act in accordance with Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, which enshrines every U.N. member's" right to "self defense." If Washington could mount preemptive strikes on states that harbored or supported terrorists, Russia could, too. Russian pundits claimed that the Kremlin was apparently attempting to use the Georgia-Pankisi problem to reassert its influence with Tbilisi and as a bargaining chip in the horse-trading over a U.N. resolution on Iraq.

Moscow did not want to lose its influence in Georgia, Central Asia, or Iraq. For years, Lukoil has been promoting a Russian route for transporting Caspian Sea oil and gas, while Western companies, backed by Washington, have proposed a route through Georgia to NATO member Turkey, bypassing Russia and diminishing Moscow's influence on developing and transporting the Caspian deposits. Moscow seemed to be signaling that it wanted a role in developing the Caspian transport route—and that it could destabilize Georgia if Washington refused to come to terms. The same veiled threat could be made elsewhere: Washington needs Russia's continued help in Afghanistan, where the U.S.-backed post-Taliban regime is negotiating with the former Soviet Central Asian states and Washington's ally Pakistan over a proposed natural-gas pipeline.

Russia cannot browbeat Washington and does not carry the international weight she once did, so she plays her cards in Central Asia, the Trans-Caucasus, and the Middle East. The War on Terror and the Bush administration's impending war on Iraq gave Moscow a chance to use its relationship with Baghdad to try to secure Russian influence there after the fall of Hussein and to reestablish itself as a force in the region. In the meantime, the Kremlin has cultivated Iran and is still a party to the Arab-Israeli "peace process": Moscow can always play those cards later. The Kremlin may still complicate Washington's Iraq plans, depending on how secure it feels about its chances in a postwar scenario; for now, however, Putin is playing the only game in town. Giving up Saddam was easy. c

Mississippians

John Nixon, Jr.

Looking back now on my origins
There in the early part
Of last century and the people
I knew, kinsmen and neighbors,
None deigning to resemble
Even a sibling—let alone
Anyone else in the world—
Looking back now, I see
We were all characters waiting
On porches of cabins and mansions
For Bill or for Eudora
Or Tennessee to come along
And write us up. Or down.

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Chronicles Intelligence Assessment

Attack of the Jacobins

by Justin Raimondo

Trent Lott—to the guillotine! The cry has gone up, the mob is implacable, and the once-powerful and seemingly unassailable Senate majority leader has gotten the message loud and clear: Confess your sins, bare your neck, and prepare to lose your head! And for what?

What sin did this former muckamuck of the GOP commit that led "conservatives" in his party to come after him and Tom Daschle to defend him? Did he question the desirability of a tax cut? Did he imply that Al Gore really won the 2000 election? No, his great crime, for which there is apparently no forgiveness, was saying, in a tribute to Strom Thurmond on his 100th birthday, that Mississippi had voted for Thurmond in 1948, when he ran against Truman, Dewey, and Henry Wallace for the White House, and that "We're proud of it." Following the applause, Lott continued, "And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years, either."

The orchestrated storm over these remarks embodies everything that is wrong with the conservative movement, the Republican Party, and the country. Historical ignorance and hysterical self-righteousness married to a barking dogmatism have given birth to a race of inquisitors who, in this instance, come not from the left but from the ostensible right. As the *Washington Post* noted on December 14, 2002:

> The major hurdle facing Trent Lott's struggle to remain Senate majority leader is not the Democratic Party and its liberal allies, but a powerful faction within the conservative wing of the GOP—an array of columnists, southern newspapers and opinion leaders—demanding that Lott resign from his leadership position.

Their demand was met: To avoid being voted down by Senate Republicans, Lott resigned his leadership post on December 12, 2002.

The source of the fury, however, originated on the left, on the website of one Joshua Micah Marshall, a writer for the *American Prospect* and a "blogger": one of legions who maintain their own personal websites and percolate their opinions through what is called the "blogosphere." Before the story had gained any traction, Marshall emitted the "meme" or idea that percolated up to the mainstream media, putting the story in a certain context: "Of course," he wrote, "Thurmond ran as the presidential candidate on the 'States-Rights Democrat' or 'Dixiecrat' ticket—a candidacy that was based exclusively and explicitly upon the preservation of legalized segregation and opposition to voting rights and civil rights for blacks."

To say that Mr. Marshall is a liar is to imply that he knows anything about the actual history and ideology of the States' Rights Democrats. That ideology, as plainly stated in their national platform (adopted in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1948), was an expression of decentralism and radical opposition to the growth of the federal Leviathan. The platform starts out not with a paean to racial segregation but by noting that the first Democratic Party platform had resolved that "Congress has no power under the Constitution to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several states," and it goes on to provide examples of federal encroachments:

> The Executive Department, with the aid of the Supreme Court, has asserted national dominion and control of submerged oil-bearing lands in California, schools in Oklahoma and Missouri, primary elections in Texas, South Carolina and Louisiana, restrictive covenants in New York and the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions, as well as religious instruction in Illinois.

This is a movement "based exclusively and explicitly" on an appeal to racism? While it is true that the catalyst for the Democratic split was the passage of civil-rights planks in the Democratic platform, the States' Rights Democrats' critique of the national Democrats was based on the fear of the extent to which such statutes would be enforced—and by whom—once they became law. The Dixiecrats' indictment of a supercentralized federal police force was echoed years later by civil-libertarian critics of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI run amok: "This infamous and iniquitous program calls for" the establishment of a civil-rights unit in the Department of Justice, complete with "a special unit of investigators." The result could only be "a police state in a totalitarian, centralized, bureaucratic government."

In a dig that the neoconservative Lott-haters will wince at, the States' Rights Democrats' convention averred that the national Democratic convention "hypocritically denounced totalitarianism abroad but unblushingly proposed and approved it at home." But the real reasons for the split are, perhaps, explained in this embittered polemic:

> The convention that insulted the South in the party platform advocated giving the Virgin Islands and other dependencies of the United States "the maximum degree of local self-government." When an effort was made to amend this part of the platform so as to make it read that the party favored giving the Virgin Islands and the several states the maximum degree of local self-government, the amendment adding the words "the several states" was stricken out.

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The South was to be denied the rights guaranteed even to colonies. It was the final straw, a mortal insult that drove the proud Southerners out of the Democratic fold and eventually led to the break-up of the old New Deal coalition, paving the way for a realignment in favor of the Republicans.

The States' Rights campaign of 1948 was a regionalist, constitutionalist, and radical decentralist insurgency against the growing power of the federal government, the last resistance inside the Democratic Party to the idea that big government is the savior of us all. There are exactly two references to racial segregation in the States' Rights platform, one of which simply reiterates the effects of the national party's civil-rights plank, while the other affirms:

> We stand for the segregation of the races and the racial integrity of each race; the constitutional right to choose one's associates; to accept private employment without governmental interference, and to earn one's living in any lawful way. We oppose the elimination of segregation [in] employment by Federal bureaucrats called for by the misnamed civil rights program. We favor home rule, local self-government and a minimum interference with individual rights.

Well beyond 1948, the States' Rights Democrats were hardly alone in their view of the proper relations between the races. *National Review*, which demanded that Lott resign, opposed the 1964 Civil Rights Act and hailed Barry Goldwater when he voted against it. Richard M. Weaver, in the July 13, 1957, issue of NR, wrote:

> "Integration" and "Communization" are, after all, pretty closely synonymous. In light of what is happening today, the first may be little more than a euphemism for the second. It does not take many steps to get from the "integrating" of facilities to the "communizing" of facilities, if the impulse is there.

The States' Rights platform reflects an identical theme: not fear of blacks but fear of the methods that a federal campaign to eliminate segregation would require. The argument against the civil-rights planks is not that blacks represent a mortal threat but that the federal government does. In retrospect—as the Justice Department targets private companies for not filling victim-group quotas, as sexual exotics cry "discrimination" when their "right" to violate both property rights and social propriety is denied, and as a special category of "hate crimes" is created to punish those who think criminal thoughts—the Dixiecrats' fear of a "totalitarian police state" looks prophetic.

The States' Rights Democrats would agree with Weaver, who characterized the civil-rights advocates with stunning accuracy: "In a free society, associations for educational, cultural, social, and business purposes have a right to protect their integrity against political fanaticism. The alternative to this is the destruction of free society and the replacement of its functions by government, which is the Marxist dream."

"Fanaticism" certainly describes the spirit of the Jacobin mob that bayed for Senator Lott's blood; that these *sans-culottes* call themselves "conservatives" is an intellectual crime for which there cannot be punishment enough. An entirely new and lower level of Hades will have to be created for David Frum, the neoconservative political commissar who, in effect, added Lott to the "Axis of Evil"—a phrase Frum coined while serving as the President's speechwriter. While averring that "I for one do not believe Trent Lott is a racist or a segregationist," Frum sentenced him to political Siberia because what Lott intended as "a greasy squirt of flattery" became, inexplicably, "the most emphatic repudiation of desegregation to be heard from a national political figure since George Wallace's first presidential campaign." Frum's verdict is a stern one:

> Lott's words suggest that one of the three most powerful and visible Republicans in the nation privately thinks that desegregation, civil rights, and equal voting rights were all a big mistake. These would be disgraceful thoughts to think, if Lott thought them. If Lott thought them, any Republican who accepted his leadership would share in the disgrace. So Lott needs to make it clear that he does not in fact think them.

Lott is guilty of committing a thoughtcrime, and a mere confession is not enough: He must be "cleansed," as several commentators put it, along with the GOP, of any hint that he might, deep down, believe in property rights instead of civil rights. This is the neoconservative style, a relentless hectoring imported to the right by ex-leftists who seem inspired by the example of the Moscow Trials.

Trent Lott is not on trial here, however; nor is Strom Thurmond, who continues to defy his critics by threatening to outlive them. The two senators are just stand-ins, for the goal of the pretentious little commissars of the neoconservative movement is to delegitimize the very idea of resistance to the Leviathan and to install the post-New Deal Welfare-Warfare State as the "conservative" ideal. Frum and his fellow despoilers of a proud tradition want to unseat not just Senator Lott but the principle of subsidiarity that is central to the Old Right of Weaver, Russell Kirk, and Frank S. Meyer. In the brave new imperial America that the neocons are building for us—fully mobilized for war and centralized out of military necessity—states' rights have no place, the concept of local self-government is inherently subversive, and idiosyncratic regionalism is close to treason.

Lott was seven years old when Thurmond carried the banner of States' Rights, and he is hardly an Old Right stalwart. He crawled on his belly, begging for forgiveness—a tactic that only emboldened the circling sharks who smelled blood in the water and wanted more than a taste; moreover, his understanding of what the States' Rights Democrats were defending apart from segregation is exactly nil, as the following excerpt from an interview with Larry King makes all too clear:

> LOTT: But I do still think that there are issues that Senator Thurmond has advocated that are in the best interests of his state and people of all backgrounds. So . . .
>
> KING: But you don't think he'd of [*sic*] been a better president, say, than Harry Truman who defeated him that year?
>
> LOTT: You know, I'd have to go back and look at the election of that year. Harry Truman obviously did a lot of great things for our country, and, you know, I was trying to remember who the Republican nominee was . . .
>
> KING: Dewey. Tom Dewey.

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LOTT: Yes, it was Dewey. I don't—you know, I couldn't tell you one thing about what Dewey's policies were at the time.

That Lott could not even remember Dewey's name, let alone what he stood for, is hardly surprising. What ought to stun conservatives is that a Republican majority leader, challenged to come out for Truman lest he prove himself guilty of a hate crime, stumbles over his own words. But this hardly comes as a shock to those of us who long ago observed that the conservative movement has been taken over by "former" Hubert Humphrey-"Scoop" Jackson Democrats, for whom Truman is a demigod (with FDR and Lincoln being their two principal deities).

In his semi-autobiographical polemic against the neoconservative invasion of the conservative movement, *The Betrayal of the American Right*, the late libertarian theorist Murray N. Rothbard depicted the 1948 triumph of the Deweyites as "another severe blow to the Old Right cause in the Republican party," along with the defection of former anti-interventionist Sen. Arthur Vandenberg to the liberal-interventionist camp: "Dewey now [is] a representative of the Eastern, Wall Street internationalist, statist, 'leftish' Establishment. Dewey refused to defend the conservative record of the 80th Congress against Harry Truman's sneers at being 'do-nothings.' (Actually, they had done far too much.)"

As a young stalwart of the Old Right, then a graduate student at Columbia University, Rothbard was faced with a choice between Dewey—the New Deal-lite version of Harry Truman—and the outright red revolutionism of Henry Wallace and the communist-controlled Progressive Party. What was the right-winger of 1948 to do, aside from staying at home that year? "I could not support Dewey for President," Rothbard recalled, "and was the only northerner at Columbia to join the short-lived Students for Thurmond club, basing my support on Thurmond's decentralist, states' rights program."

Cast adrift by the Republicans, the conservatives of 1948 were in search of a political vehicle, and there were various and sundry third-party movements on the right in those days, none of which went anywhere. Rothbard was eager to see the growth of some sort of organized effort, and after Thurmond polled 1,169,021 popular votes and 39 electoral votes, Rothbard wrote to the States' Rights Democrats' national headquarters, describing his participation in Students for Thurmond but noting:

> My support, however, was not extremely enthusiastic, because, although I agreed wholeheartedly with the platform and Thurmond's campaign speeches, I felt that it was keyed too much to purely Southern interests. Sure, the Civil Tyranny program must be combated, but what about the myriad invasions of states['] rights in other fields by the power-hungry Washington bureaucracy? In other words, while you always claimed that yours was a national movement, by talking only of the Civil Tyranny program you threw away any attraction to Northern and Western voters.

Rothbard went on to urge the States' Rights movement to organize nationally and to build a party "consisting of Southern Democrats and real Republicans (omitting the me-too Republicans) to launch a dynamic offensive against National Socialism in this country before it is too late. I am greatly elated over your new platform because I believe it points in that direction."

This new coalition against an aggressively expansive power centered in Washington *did* take place, though not in the States' Rights movement, which quickly dissipated, but in the Republican Party. The Dixiecrat split led to the breakdown of the New Deal coalition and the eventual defection of the South to the GOP column. As the writers of the States' Rights platform had bitterly noted, the "solid South" had regularly supplied 50 percent of the presidential electors required to put a Democrat in the White House. For that, the party had demoted the South to a status lower than a colony. The implicit threat that such loyalty could not long endure was carried out.

Rothbard's missive prefigures the process that led to the Reagan Revolution, creating a broad front of conservatives, libertarians, and a rising class of new entrepreneurs who dreamed of rolling back the Leviathan once the Cold War had ended. What the Torquemadas of the new Inquisition are demanding is a reversal of that process, the undoing of the grand coalition in a gigantic purge that surely will not end with Senator Lott. In a weirdly inverted version of McCarthyism, every political figure of any stature will now be vetted for political correctness on the issue of "civil rights" for every victim group. The worship of Lincoln, required of all good neocons, will become the *sharia* of the conservative movement, where the Stars and Bars are now about as welcome as a crucifix in Mecca. Conservative scholars and activists who fail to appreciate the new dispensation are slated to meet the fate that the mullahs envisioned for Salman Rushdie.

In seeking to repeal the legacy of the Old Right and to replace it with the politics of Harry Truman, the neocons are displaying the fanatically antiracist and politically correct attitudes of the other third party in the presidential election of 1948—Henry Wallace's Progressives, controlled top to bottom by the American followers of Stalin. Thus, that we are now reenacting the political purges of the 1930's ought to surprise nobody.

But good news is on the horizon: A backlash will not be long in coming. The Republican base does not swallow the idea of Martin Luther King, Jr., as a conservative icon, and the peculiar concept that Sherman's March through Georgia was the incarnation of "national greatness" is an idea that only a Marxist or a neocon could love. The editors of *National Review* seem to understand the danger of mass defections and seek to stanch the flow by making Lott the issue:

> Many conservatives will be tempted to defend Lott because of the nature of some of the attacks on him. It's an understandable impulse. But it is possible for someone simultaneously to suffer unfair attacks, handle himself and his predicament poorly, and be an underwhelming political figure. Trent Lott has managed a trifecta. For *NR* to rally to his side now would amount to defending him because he is being accused of racism.

It does not matter whether the accusations of racism are unfair. Life is unfair, and you had better get used to it. This is the cynical message that the alleged leaders of the conservative movement are sending their followers, effectively putting them on notice that all Republican politicians will now be subject to the same sort of scrutiny. It is a demoralizing message, one that can only lead to defeat, because the only question that remains is: Who is next?

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Politics and Power

by Derek Turner

"A bastard kind of Christianity, but a living kind; with a heart-life in it; not dead, chopping barren logic merely."

—Thomas Carlyle

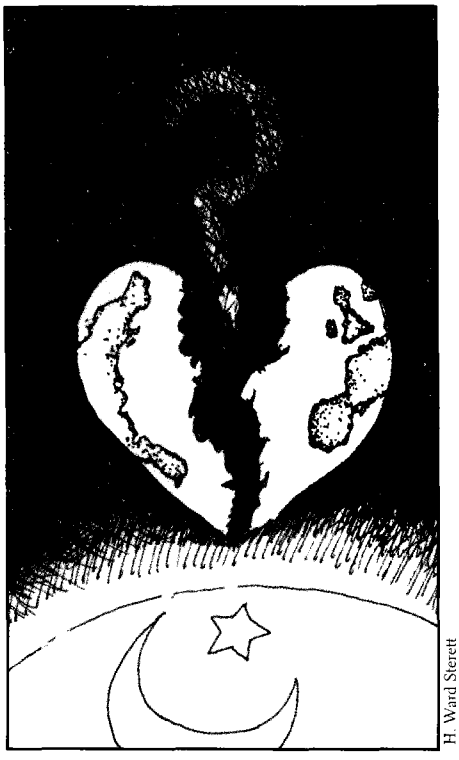
The West and the Rest: Globalization and the Terrorist Threat
by Roger Scruton
Wilmington, DE: ISI Books;
187 pp., $19.95

◆

Since September 11, 2001, there have been many articles and several books purporting to explain what led up to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Intelligence and military analyses, many of them useful, vie for attention with political tracts, many of them rather less useful—and most, bizarrely enough, tend to conclude that war against Saddam Hussein (a secular Arab nationalist, loathed by radical Muslims, who has never been linked to the September 11 attacks) is the only way to bring radical Muslims to heel. Such sage statesmanship has proved its utility before—notably in Vietnam.

Although the author, probably Britain's best-known conservative intellectual, was clearly impelled to write by the events of that ghastly September morning, *The West and the Rest* is both better written and more ambitious than other works "inspired" by that day. Despite the book's disconcertingly dismissive title and its modest length, this is a richly rewarding work, filled with profundity and felicitous phraseology, with occasional dips into near-poetry—"a landscape that had worn its Biblical aspect for centuries, with star-spangled nights above stone-built villages and historic cities."

Derek Turner is the editor of Right Now!, *published in London.*



H. Ward Sleeth

Scruton's aim is to explain not just why the terrorists think and behave as they do but what it is about the West that differentiates it from "the rest"—notably Islam. And why does the West arouse such hatred in so many non-Western hearts? (We might also ask why the West arouses such indifference in so many Western hearts—a question Scruton has been considering for many years.)

Scruton handles these complex questions, and many others, with his customary intellectual rigor and occasional flashes of that dry wit that always lifts his work above the merely elegiac. At a recent dinner to mark the 20th anniversary of the *Salisbury Review*, the high Tory magazine he edited from its inception until last year, he commented memorably on the vagaries that had turned him "from a despised member of the lower orders to a despised spokesman for the upper class"—thus humorously encapsulating both his own life and the wider changes within society. One example of sere insight from *The West and the Rest* will suffice: "One may reasonably wonder at the miraculous correspondence between the 'just society' as it emerges from [John] Rawls's thought-experiment and the received ideas of liberal New York."

What makes *The West and the Rest* so distinctive is its essential evenhandedness. Maybe only an ultratraditionalist observer could have been so objective or so sympathetic. Scruton writes more in sorrow than in anger—sorrow at the way in which two great human achievements have suffered at the hands of the wreckers. Many of the developments he deplores in the Middle East, he also deplores at home.

Scruton always tries to see things from an Islamic perspective—but also from ours. An unabashed Western patriot, he is clearly an admirer of Islamic civilization and maybe even slightly envious of Muslim certainty. Why blame Islam for rejecting Western ways, he asks in his preface,

> when they, in their turn, involve a rejection of the idea on which Islam is founded—the idea of God's immutable will, revealed once and for all to his Prophet, in the form of an unbreachable and unchangeable code of law?

Anyone who can write of the Meccan *suras* that "They are the great dawn-vision of an impassioned monotheist, from whose soul oppressive shadows are being chased away" is no narrow dogmatist. And Scruton clearly differentiates Islam as a pious way of life from the "armed

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doctrine" of Islamism—although he does note that the latter is "not an accidental product" of the religion.

Scruton waxes passionate about the effects that globalization has had on the Islamic world, including how modernist architecture, "by which local identities are razed and the earth re-shaped as a ubiquitous nowhere," has outraged Muslim mores. He describes the Muslim city memorably as "a hive of private spaces, built cell on cell," above whose rooftops "the minarets point to God like outstretched fingers." To people accustomed to these cityscapes, and this kind of relationship with Allah, skyscrapers (like the World Trade Center) can seem a kind of permanent blasphemy in glass and steel, fingers stuck up at Allah in defiance instead of raised in supplication.

Scruton also decries the waves of arrogant global legislation that arouse resentment and fury among those at whom the legislation is aimed: "a constant stream of unaccountable regulations issues from the meetings of the Western powers as though the rest had no choice but to accept them." This kind of legislation is dreamed up and issued by adherents of what Samuel Huntington calls Western "universalism": a belief that Western values are actually universal values—or would be, if only there were enough "education." Caught up in hubristic arrogance, neoconservatives and multiculturalists alike tend to fall into this tempting trap. (They fail to notice how condescending and perhaps even subconsciously "racist" such attitudes are—but that's another story.)

Yet Roger Scruton is above all a man of the West, who understands Islam largely because he comprehends the plight of the West. At the risk of sounding glib, I could sum up the situation by saying that the Muslims have too much religion, whereas we now have too little.

Scruton believes that the Western and Islamic worldviews are essentially incompatible. As he puts it, "Western societies are governed by politics; the rest are ruled by power." On the one hand, there is the resilient Western ideal stretching back to the Greeks and Romans—the nation-state with a corporate personality, a network of public institutions, a corpus of secular law (to Scruton, "perhaps the most important force in the emergence of European forms of sovereignty"), and a commitment to freedom of inquiry (which, paradoxically, leads to greater equilibrium).

These nation-states may have originally grown from tribes, but early tribal loyalties have been overlaid by later connections and obligations, until the Western model has emerged, "composed of communities held together by a political process, and by the rights and duties of the citizen as defined by that process." When these connections and obligations are broken (by atavistic internal upheavals, or through loss of sovereignty to transnational institutions), a country gradually slides out of the Western orbit. Scruton gives the example of Zimbabwe, which he calls a Western country, now reverting to tribal type. (Surely, this is a bad example, as Zimbabwe was only exposed to Roman law and Christian doctrine for a relatively short time and can only ever have been superficially Western, at best.)

On the other hand, there is the Islamic world, run on nonnational, nonpublic lines and recognizing no ultimate authority but Allah, in whose name successive factions fight for control. "It is not possible" writes Scruton,

> for a Muslim to believe that the conception of the good that is so clearly specified in . . . the Koran is to be excluded from the social contract . . . In Muslim eyes, this conception, and this alone, gives legitimacy to the political order: a thought which has the disturbing corollary that the political order is almost everywhere illegitimate, and nowhere more so than in the states where Islam is the official faith.

The Western social contract is about communities, united by feelings of affinity, willing to work together and make sacrifices under man-made laws. The Islamic world is made up of millions of people who believe that what does not come directly from Allah is invalid. The Western model is dynamic; the Islamic, static:

> Those matters which, in Western societies, are resolved by negotiation, compromise and the laborious work of offices and committees are [in Islamic societies] the object of immovable and eternal decrees.

Between these two ideals, there can be no compromise, except insofar as individuals on either side can turn a blind eye to their neighbors' foibles. This is more difficult for Muslims than for us, because of the technological prowess of the West, which has led to a proliferation of imagery that they find morally offensive,

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and because of the proselytizing nature both of their own faith and of our "religion" of international liberalism (or should that be *libertinism*?). The tides of history, which sought to impose the Western template on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, and the greater ease of communications and travel have brought these two previously self-contained worlds into collision. (Ironically, Muslim opponents of the West are only too happy to use Western technology and methods to spread their mayhem.) Only in Turkey has the Western model taken firm root; even there, however, the state needs to be propped up by the army—and the social costs have been high, with Turkey cut off from her own past and young people continually attracted to extreme ideologies, whether Islamic, communist, or national socialist.

Occasionally, Scruton takes his argument about the fundamental significance of the nation-state too far. He says, for instance, that America is not under attack because of her support for Israel. Instead, Israel is under attack because of her closeness to America—"for Israel is a nation-state established where no nation-state should be—a place where the only law should be the *shari'a*, and the only loyalty that of Islam." Here, he may be too generous to Muslims, making their objection to Israel, and to Jews, sound more rational than it really is. Yes, there may be much dislike of Israel as a symbol of Western decadence, but there is also a strong tradition of naked hatred of Jews all across the Arab world. Recently, Egyptian state television produced a 14-part TV series based on the childish forgery *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, and such books are never out of print in the Arab world.

Scruton may also be too generous to the West when he compares Western politicians favorably with Islamic politicians. For instance, he writes,

> with the exception of delegates from personal states, those who turn up to UN meetings literally have no business being there. They are not the representatives of the people from whose territory they come, and if they speak for anyone it is for the party, faction, or tyrant who sent them.

Yet there is surely little evidence that the present British delegation to the United Nations speaks for anyone except the Labour government, or that the U.S. delegation cares very much about the thoughts and feelings of Democratic voters. The vast majority of politicians have always thought mostly selfishly and in the short term. Earlier, Scruton seems to recognize this, in his dry observation that the legitimacy of the social contract "is endorsed by almost every Western politician, at least when out of office."

The West and the Rest is divided into five chapters, with nine pages of notes and a detailed index. "The Social Contract" deals ably and comprehensively with the nature of Western societies. "Enlightenment, Citizenship, and Loyalty" examines citizenship and nationality and the effects of the Enlightenment on these vital concepts. Scruton attacks the deconstructionists who "owe their intellectual eminence . . . to their role in giving authority to the rejection of authority, and to their absolute commitment to the impossibility of absolute commitments," leading to "a first-person plural of denial." He also assails the postmodernists who claim that Western culture has "dressed up Western ways of thinking as though they had universal force" in order to further a specifically ethnic agenda. Yet, while the postmodernists are undoubtedly wrong to assert that Western imperial adventurism was all a racist conspiracy, Scruton arguably does not ascribe enough importance to the ethnic element within Western culture.

"Holy Law" looks at Islamic societies, with a useful and engrossing summary of the chief theological strands within Islam and potted histories of Islamic jurisprudence and such important religiopolitical movements as Wahhabism and the Muslim Brotherhood. "Globalisation" analyzes how and why exported Western mores have come into radical conflict with the immovable mass of Islam. Finally, Scruton sums up his findings and ideas and makes several admittedly ambitious, but perfectly feasible, suggestions. The surest way of regaining control over our own destinies, he believes, is to retain the classical Western model of nation-states governed by secular law. Therefore, we should hold on to our respective national sovereignties; halt or reverse the expansion of international bodies like the United Nations, the European Union, and the World Trade Organization; rein in the international lawmakers and cut down on predatory litigation at home; place more controls on big business; be more respectful of tradition and local customs; tighten up on immigration (partly by scrapping the 1951 U.N. Convention on Refugees and Asylum); and encourage assimilation. Perhaps most ambitiously—and least realistically—we need to think about "our devotion to prosperity, and the habits of consumption that have led us to depend upon raw materials, such as oil, which cannot be obtained within our territory."

There will be more Islamic terrorism. As Scruton observes, "because [Islamic terrorism's] purpose is religious rather than political, the goal is incapable of realization." Thanks to our technology and our tolerance, Westerners will be brought more and more often into brutal contact with Muslims' "seething desire to punish." It is not a question of if, but of when Muslim terrorists will attack other Western capital cities, probably starting with London, where—thanks to almost unbelievably foolish immigration policies, pursued over decades, in combination with state-sponsored multiculturalism and curbs on free speech—there exists a large and vital pool of potential support and resources. The argument, therefore, is likely to continue indefinitely, punctuated by violent action and (perhaps) reaction.

Whether this remarkable book will receive the attention it deserves is a different matter. The typical, defeatist "conservative" response was encapsulated in an astute but essentially despairing review in the *Daily Telegraph* on November 16, 2002: "With this mammoth, unrealistic wish list of things to get rid of, Scruton's argument breaks down." In other words, it is all too difficult, so we had better not even try. Of itself, *The West and the Rest* will not break through that barrier of laziness and fear, but it will undoubtedly help to give us the "credible alternative" we desperately need.

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Making Energy

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Old Thunder: A Life of Hilaire Belloc
by Joseph Pearce
San Francisco: Ignatius Press;
318 pp., $24.95

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The lives of great men are largely unconstrained, which may explain why there are so few great men today. All men are, of course, constrained by their personal limitations as well as by the limitations their age imposes on them, but it is in the nature of greatness to overcome such limitations to the extent that they *can* be overcome. Nevertheless, certain periods of history are more amenable to greatness than others; usually, these others are conducive more to the flourishing of what Evelyn Waugh called the Common Man (at least insofar as the Common Man understands flourishing) than to that of the Uncommon, who is constrained precisely to the extent that the Common Man is unbound.

The second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th scarcely appeared as a golden age in Western European civilization. Still, there is degree in all things; and a civilization that not only produced such a man as Hilaire Belloc but permitted him to flourish (though not financially) has a lot to be said for it (though Belloc himself might not have agreed). He was a man of fluid personality to match his mercurial temperament, and this fluidity extended to his amorphous and unpredictable career. In a more systematized and sclerotic society like our own, in which success requires that everyone be more or less identified with a single product or activity—in effect, to be his own brand name—Belloc would more likely have had a disastrous career.

Today, such a man—who took a First in History at Balliol; was elected president of the Oxford Union; underwent military training in France (of which he was, at the time, a citizen); wrote several successful volumes of cautionary verse for children and also works of "serious" poetry; walked from Paris to Rome and made a book from the journey; bought an old nine-ton cutter to sail the coast of England and made a book of *that*; stood for Parliament on the Liberal Party ticket, was elected, and once returned; openly opposed in Parliament the party he represented; earned a reputation as a radical politician, a Distributist, and an orthodox Catholic apologist; contributed a weekly magazine article on the military situation as it developed during World War I; and devoted most of the rest of his life to writing history—would be considered, from a marketing standpoint, quite unmanageable, if not unemployable. It is a credit to the country that adopted him—or he, it—that Hilaire Belloc stands today as one of the great writers produced by the England of Lloyd George and Wells, in progress toward that of Princess Di and Tony Blair.

Perhaps Belloc's success as a writer and public figure was ultimately made possible by the toleration still extended in his lifetime to striking personalities and unorthodox opinions. In Hilaire Belloc's case, of course, heterodoxy was determined for him by his faith—or, at least, by the way in which he understood that faith.

Belloc was born at La Celle St Cloud, outside Paris, to a French father who had married an English convert. He was reared on both sides of the Channel but received his education in England. As a young man, he was powerfully influenced by his mother's great friend, Henry Edward Cardinal Manning—an ultramontanist and an advocate for the poor and the working classes—who taught him that all human conflict is, at bottom, theological. (Belloc would later refer to "a dogmatic assertion of truth.") Belloc's birth in July 1870 coincided poetically with the culmination of the First Vatican Council's declaration of the dogma of papal infallibility.

Belloc took pride in his French lineage; his paternal grandfather, a well known painter, especially. As a youth, he developed a sympathetic interest in the French Revolution, and the subject of his first book is Danton. At the age of ten, he was accepted at the Oratory School near Birmingham, whose master was John Henry Cardinal Newman, also his mother's friend. And Belloc was only 21 when Pope Leo XIII issued *Rerum novarum*, his encyclical addressing social and economic injustice in the modern industrial world, which was to inspire his own and Chesterton's distributist creed in the next century. In his life of Belloc, Joseph Pearce writes,

> For the impressionable youth, whose own background was rooted in the philosophy of the Church and in the politics of the French Revolution, the combination of traditionalism and radicalism that Manning preached was a potent one.

It was so potent (and satisfying) a combination, indeed, that it satisfied Hilaire Belloc to the end of his 83 years.

Already in his Oxford days, Belloc, as president of the Union, was engaged in what Pearce describes as "cutting through the cant of left and right and countering it with a beguiling combination of radicalism and libertarianism." And he was getting away with it, and even making a name for himself—becoming a celebrity, in fact. That is what is known as civilization. In today's postcivilized world, controlled and constrained by a tightly wired and closely monitored system devised by the power-mad, the money-mad, the fanatical truth deniers, the professional liars, and their sycophants, a man's views are supposed to be all one thing or the other.

We in the West are living through a Cold Civil War in which everyone is expected to take his side and stick with it, dedicate his pen to propaganda, his mind to pabulum, and his life—private as well as public—to conformity. Anyone who does not choose his side is rejected by both and becomes not only a ridiculous figure—doing his St. Vitus Dance on the open ground between the opposing lines—but an easy target for the special amusement of the opposed riflemen. Owing to his genius, his resiliency, and his determination, Belloc would almost certainly have survived in such circumstances, and made his voice heard, if not prevail. This, after all, was the man who advised a packed political meeting in South Salford that, "If you reject [my candidacy] on account of my religion, I shall thank God that He has spared me the indignity of being your representative" (a statement that was answered, after a stunned silence, by a crash of applause). He would *not*, however, have received telegrams of congratulation on his 80th birthday from the likes of Mr. and Mrs. Churchill, nor have been featured on a radio broadcast of the BBC. Probably even the present archbishop of York (whoever he may be) would have ignored the event as well—since this, too, was the man who inveighed against the unparliamentary nature of parliamentary "democracy," complained during his own parliamentary career that "[The House of Commons] does not govern; it does not even discuss. It is plainly futile," and, after standing down from his seat, promised that, "when realities . . . enter politics . . .

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I shall re-enter politics with them."

It is a commonplace today in certain circles (*i.e.*, the losing ones) to hear people remark that, after all, living well and having fun are the best revenge. Things in Belloc's own time were not yet so grim for people of his type. Nevertheless, Belloc lived as if he thought they were, and he was determined to take *his* revenge by living the fullest life possible. Though he wrote over a hundred books and thousands of articles, Hilaire Belloc never resembled the driven careerist, the stoop-shouldered scholar locked away in his study, the pale and pasty Gradgrind bent over his desk. He was a strong and vigorous man, though inclined to corpulence in middle age as a result of an appetite equally vigorous for food, wine, and ale as for the manly activities of canoeing, sailing, yachting, tramping, horseback riding, and doing his own brick and stonework at King's Land. The "boozy halo" surrounding his and Chesterton's friendship (which produced the lumbering literary beast George Bernard Shaw dubbed the "Chesterbelloc") was legendary in their time, giving rise inevitably to such witticisms as "The Man Who Was Thirsty." Chesterton himself claimed that Belloc's "low spirits were and are much more uproarious and enlivening than anybody else's high spirits."

A typical evening with Hilaire Belloc included torrential conversation (*never* spoiled by pontification), red wine flowing, and Belloc singing his own songs in a voice that Max Beerbohm once compared (for Edmund Wilson's benefit) to that of "a very large nightingale." Even after the premature death of his beloved wife, Elodie Hogan (a California girl), when both were in their 40's, though the tragedy marked him forever and he never remarried, Belloc maintained that gusto that was a special property of his genius, manifesting itself in his work as well as in his life.

At the bottom of this *joie de vivre* was, of course, the Faith with which his name is identified. Belloc was irrepressible because he never repressed his powerful instinct for life, which was at bottom a religious impulse. Visitors to King's Land were likely to be summoned out into the night to "watch God make energy" in the sky, or treated to a peculiar family ritual round the dinner table, initiated by one child suddenly shouting out "*Hell!*" — whereupon all the Bellocs fell to clashing their knives against their plates to simulate the souls of the damned gnashing their teeth in Hades. It was faith in Heaven that gave Hilaire Belloc, when he needed it, faith in himself. Not quite 20, he was persuaded by Elodie not to make a defiant stand for election to the vacant professorship of history at Glasgow University, whose principal had informed the young man (who, as an historian, was in maturity to insist that Europe is the Faith and the Faith, Europe) that his religion was an absolute bar to the post. Belloc wrote to a friend,

> It is very sad . . . I have fits of depression when I consider that there is no future for me, but I am merry when I consider the folly, wickedness and immense complexity of the world. It is borne in upon me that before I die I shall write a play or a poem or a novel, for the sense of comedy grows in me daily.

There was, of course, another, less sensitive and more classical side to Belloc's makeup that was perceived by Chesterton at their first meeting: "What he brought into our dream was his Roman appetite for reality and for reason in action, and when he came to the door there entered with him the smell of danger."

All literature begins with poetry, and poetry has its beginnings in the recitation of the lives and deeds of great men, in whose countenances we see the face of the poet-biographer reflected, however faintly, if he is worthy of his subject. Having read *Old Thunder*, I know Hilaire Belloc much better than I did before, while suspecting I might recognize Joseph Pearce himself from among a congeries of faces across a crowded room.

Chilton Williamson, Jr., is Chronicles' *senior editor for books.*

Palm and Pine

by Jeffrey Meyers

The Long Recessional: The Imperial Life of Rudyard Kipling
by David Gilmour
New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 351 pp., $26.00

◆

David Gilmour's witty and elegant, original and useful book chronicles "Kipling's political life, his early role as apostle of the Empire, the embodiment of imperial aspiration, and his later one as the prophet of national decline." Sympathetic yet aware of Kipling's faults, Gilmour shows that his ideas were more subtle than those of a crude imperialist. Kipling's political causes included

> British rule in India, Imperial Federation, Tariff Reform, the survival of France, compulsory military service, the preservation of Ulster from home-ruled Ireland, the protection of Britain from the dangers of Germany . . . and the cause of British supremacy in southern Africa.

Always a good hater and man of strong words, Kipling's range of loathing

> stretched from the Germans to the Québécois, and from the Irish to the Indian National Congress. In England it encompassed trade unions, democracy, liberalism, Free Trade, socialism, [suffragettes,] and bungalows.

His *bêtes noires* included prime ministers H.H. Asquith, Lloyd George, and Winston Churchill, as well as Lord Ripon, the viceroy of India. His pantheon of heroes consisted of Cecil Rhodes, proconsul Alfred Milner, colonial secretary Joseph Chamberlain, and Teddy Roosevelt, who warned Kipling that a war with England over the Venezuela boundary would be worthwhile if it enabled America to seize Canada.

Born in India, the son of an artist and a teacher, with (like Maugham and Orwell) a public-school but not a university education, physically unattractive, unusually dark, extremely nearsighted, personally insecure, and aggressively trying to make his way in the world, the young Kipling felt threatened by India and the Indians and accepted the moral justification of imperialism: "introducing a sane and orderly administration into the dark places of the earth." His two great themes were the need to defend civilization against brute nature and barbarian people and the stoic self-sacrifice of the British officials who devoted their lives to the welfare of the native population. His virtues throughout life were "courage, loyalty, obedience, self-control, leadership and endurance."

Like most Anglo-Indian children, Kipling was educated in England because it

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was "'inexpedient' to create little orientalized pashas . . . enervated by the climate and thinking of India as 'home.'" But the harrowing maltreatment he suffered in a Southsea boarding house engendered a streak of cruelty in his work. His first, teenage job was at the *Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore (now in Pakistan). Fluent in Hindi, he loved to pick up useful information by wandering through Lahore's labyrinthine alleys, bazaars, and opium dens. The journalist's job, he felt, was alerting the public and the government to "the problems of a particular district and hammering away at them until something was done."

Kipling's first volume of stories, *Plain Tales From the Hills* (1888), taught "the English something of the world outside England" and created the English image of India. It gave Oscar Wilde, his literary antithesis, the sensation of sitting "under a palm-tree reading life by superb flashes of vulgarity." Both his stories and poems were honed by high craftsmanship and an economy of implication. Gilmour gets to the core of the work in only a few sentences. He rapidly covers Kipling's career and shrewdly places it in its political context.

In Kipling's poignant and relentlessly rhythmic "Arithmetic on the Frontier," the tragic fate of a British officer, cut down by a long-barreled Afghan matchlock, symbolizes the collision of medieval and modern civilizations, where highly trained soldiers with the latest weapons are defeated by a ruthless enemy with nothing to lose:

> A scrimmage in a Border Station—
> A canter down some dark defile—
> Two thousand pounds of education
> Drops to a ten-rupee *jezail*.

Often inspired by the Bible, ballads, and hymns, Kipling introduced more memorable phrases into English than any writer since Shakespeare. "Recessional" (the retirement of clergy and choir at the end of a service) is one of the most famous poems in the language. It appeals "to God for his mercy and to his people for repentance," and contains many impressive lines:

> Beneath whose awful Hand we
> hold
> Dominion over palm and pine . . .
> The tumult and the shouting dies;
> The captains and the kings
> depart . . .

> Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
> Is one with Nineveh and Tyre! . . .

as well as the notorious:

> Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
> Or lesser breeds without the law . . .

"In the Neolithic Age" contrasts the laxity of the East with the strict morality of the West: "And the wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Khatmandhu, / And the crimes of Clapham chaste in Martaban." I remembered these lines when I took the ferry in Burma from Moulmein to Martaban. But in that swampy, sleepy village, I saw no signs of prodigious depravity or sexual corruption. In "Mándalay," Kipling made an uncharacteristic mistake. To the west of Moulmein, across the bay, is the coast of central Burma; to the east, across the land, is Siam. So the dawn does *not* come up "like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!" For China, even Indochina, is nowhere near Moulmein or its bay.

Kipling, who assumed the prophetic role, had the uncanny ability to anticipate, express, and encourage public sentiment "just before it became apparent." He had no illusions and correctly predicted the dangers of "the Boers and apartheid, the Kaiser and a war, Hitler and another war, the Hindu-Muslim strife whenever Britain decided to withdraw from India." After the Boer War and the advent of a Liberal government in 1905, however, his role changed: "No longer the apostle whom everyone wanted to hear, he was consigned to the role of Cassandra, condemned to utter prophecies that no one would heed."

Kipling admired strong conquerors and, like Shaw and Churchill, at first praised Mussolini—though he later came to regard him as an irrational megalomaniac. But Kipling himself was a tame and docile husband, completely under the thumb of his old dreadnought of a wife. One friend described his married life as "'one of complete surrender. He had handed himself over bodily, financially and spiritually to his spouse,' obeying her commands without 'any signs of murmuring or even of incipient mutiny.'" Carrie, a cross between a possessive nanny and a prison matron, would interrupt him, finish his stories, and, when he became too lively after a few bottles of wine, order him to bed. It is surprising that she allowed him to refuse all official posts and distinctions, including a knighthood and the highly coveted Order of Merit. She constantly threatened to jump out of the window if he did not do exactly as she wanted, and it is a great pity that he never took her up on the offer.

Speaking of reactionary authors in his elegy on Yeats, Auden wrote that time pardoned Kipling and Claudel—pardoned them for writing well. Despite current political cant, there is no longer any need to pardon Kipling for glorifying imperialism. For all its economic exploitation, Britain laid the permanent foundations of medicine, education, justice, administration, transport, and industry in all the countries it ruled. It provided quinine and vaccinations, built roads, railways, and canals. It maintained the peace, protected minorities, and prevented people from dying of disease and starvation. British administrators brought feudal societies into the modern world and maintained a standard of honesty that has completely disappeared from the tropical countries of what once was the British Empire.

Jeffrey Meyers, Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, has recently completed a life of Somerset Maugham.

The Point of War

by H.A. Scott Trask

Phantoms of a Blood-Stained Period: The Complete Civil War Writings of Ambrose Bierce
Edited by Russell Duncan & David J. Klooster
Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press; 352 pp., $19.95

◆

The U.S. government continues its slow but relentless buildup of military forces in the Middle East, preparing to unleash "Fourth-Generation" warfare against the eighth reincarnation of Adolf Hitler. Historians and pseudohistorians extol the liberating glories of past redemptive wars waged by God's instrument on earth. The Bush administration, neocons, and theocons (and other cons in the pay of big oil or the Israeli lobby) promise that, out of charred flesh, severed limbs, radiation poisoning, and high-altitude massacre, the glorious dawn of Islamic democracy, peace, and tolerance

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shall arise. We are reminded, once again, that, for those who run the country, "doin' good ain't got no end." Our masters may also be thinking that death means a higher price for Raytheon shares and that Baghdad is well worth a reelection.

Lt. Ambrose Bierce of the Ninth Indiana Regiment and the Army of the Ohio would find none of this unusual or unexpected. In his postwar career as a journalist in San Francisco, Bierce ridiculed "sycophantic historians and biographers" for whom the truth of history was not "good enough," denounced "the noncombatant contingent in Washington" who clamored for more slaughter and more punishment of Southern civilians, and observed with disgust that "this is a country of religious cant" whose public rhetoric was "destitute alike of discernment and moderation." He expected future wars and insane crusades, and he did not anticipate the dawning of a New Age of Man.

Bierce enlisted as a private in the Northern Army at the call of President Lincoln for volunteers to suppress the "insurrection" in the South. His intelligence, composure, and bravery under fire earned him a promotion to the officer corps by late 1862; soon thereafter, he was made a first lieutenant and appointed to the headquarters staff as a topographical engineer. Bierce fought in almost every major battle in the Western theater: Shiloh, Stone's River, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Franklin, and Nashville. At Kennesaw Mountain, he was shot in the head; his wound was serious, and he never fully recovered. Recurrent spells of fainting and dizziness caused his superiors to release him from active duty in January 1865.

Apart from his justly famous story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," Bierce's Civil War writings have been neglected by historians and professors of literature. There is a reason: Bierce failed to make the expected deposit in the Northern Treasury of Virtue. Russell Duncan's and David J. Klooster's collection includes all of Bierce's writings on the war, both his short stories and his articles. The former combine brutal and grotesque depictions of the horror of battle with supernatural and ghostly elements. He claimed that what his critics dismissed as "improbable" or "impossible" in his stories were often "transcripts from memory—things that actually occurred before my eyes." His accounts of those battles are among the most realistic and vivid ever written.

Reading Bierce is the best antidote to the pious banalities of Eric Foner, James McPherson, Victor Davis Hanson, and other historians of the school of melodrama, who celebrate the war as a demonstration of Northern righteousness and a landmark on the road to universal freedom and equality. Bierce would have none of the iconography surrounding Grant and Sherman. From personal observation, he knew the former as a drunkard, a "poor tactician," and a man who "cherished personal resentments." While he admitted that Grant was a competent strategist, he regarded Don Carlos Buell, the general who saved Grant's army from annihilation at Pittsburgh Landing during the battle of Shiloh, as the better general and the better man. Bierce noted with bitterness that Lincoln removed Buell from command of the Army of Ohio because he had displeased "the seraphim and cherubim of Abolition." In other words, he frowned upon the looting and burning of plantations.

Bierce clearly regretted his part in a war that he came to regard as an unnecessary slaughter of Christians and fellow countrymen. He described the Southerners who died in battle as "fallen brothers" and "honest and courageous foemen." He even admitted that

> as a rule the Confederates fought better than our men. On even terms they commonly defeated us; nearly all our victories were won by superior numbers, better arms and advantages of position.

Bierce had nothing but contempt for "the period of vilification" and Reconstruction that followed the war. "The brave respect the brave," and only a coward or blackguard would attempt to rekindle the fires of sectional hate.

Ambrose Bierce came to doubt whether the war he had thought was waged "for Freedom" was really fought for that at all. As a mature man, he was glad that "other issues" had been "involved," for, in his mind, only those issues gave any justification for the war. Regrettably, he does not explain what he means. Bierce admits to having judged every word and deed by "the infallible criteria" of a set of absolute "principles." As an older man and a writer, he realized that the world was more complex and that clear demarcations of virtue and goodness are hard to make. "I have learned that slavery is not always unrighteous, nor liberty always desirable, except for oneself, that tyranny and despotism are sometimes beneficent." Uttered today, such words would result in crucifixion before the altar of political correctness.

In "The Confederate Flags," Bierce argues that Southerners should be pardoned for their zeal for liberty. His words offer a stinging rebuke to the complacency and apathy of modern Americans who will submit to any exaction or humiliation.

> It may be wrong, it may be right, to rise
> In warlike insurrection:
> The loyalty that fools so dearly prize
> May mean subjection.
> Be loyal to your country, yes—but how
> If tyrants hold dominion?
> The South believed they did; can't you allow
> For that opinion?
> He who will never rise though rulers plot,
> His liberties despising—
> How is he manlier than the *sans-culottes*
> Who's always rising?

In another poem, Bierce rebuked the pharisaical spirit of the Radical Republicans. It is a vengeful and intolerant spirit, which continues to afflict our history texts and the op-ed pages of our newspapers.

> What if the dead whom still you hate
> Were wrong? Are you so surely right? . . .
>
> Men live and die, and other men
> Arise with knowledge diverse:
> What seemed a blessing seems a curse,
> And Now is still at odds with Then.
>
> The years go on, the old comes back
> To mock the new beneath the sun
> Is *nothing* new; ideas run
> Recurrent in an endless track.
>
> What most we censure, men as wise
> Have reverently practiced; nor
> Will future wisdom fail to war
> On principles we dearly prize.

In the 20th century, Americans have suffered from two delusions about the fu-

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ture of war. One is that wars will soon cease. Bierce knew that this is an age-old fantasy: "The dream of a time when the nation shall war no more is a pleasant dream and an ancient." The second is that the dreadfulness of vast arrays of the most deadly and advanced weaponry will deter men from using them. Nonsense, wrote Bierce. "Men's sense of their power to make [war] dreadful is precisely the thing that most encourages them to wage it."

> Men do not construct expensive machinery, taxing themselves poor to keep it in working order, without ultimately setting it going. The more of its income a nation has to spend in preparation for war, the more certainly it will go to war. Its means of defense are a means of aggression, and the stronger it feels itself to strike for its altars and its fires, the more spirited becomes its desire to go across the border to upset the altars and extinguish the fires of its neighbors.

The carnage of World War I fully vindicated Bierce's prescient pessimism, as did Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's petulant rebuke of Gen. Colin Powell's objection to intervening militarily in the Bosnian civil war—"What's the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about if we can't use it?" Indeed. And what's the point of studying the Civil War without reading Bierce?

H.A. Scott Trask has a Ph.D. in American history, is finishing a political study of antebellum political economist Condy Raguet of Philadelphia, and is writing a book on the Northern antiwar movement during the War Between the States.

LIBERAL ARTS

NOW THAT YOU'VE RECORDED A NEW GOSPEL ALBUM . . .

"**CCM Magazine:** Our staff is dying to know, what exactly does it mean to you to be 'Bootylicious'?
"**Williams:** . . . [T]hat song was about high self esteem. . . . I guess cause it had the word 'booty' in it, that's what kind of struck people."
—*from a November 2002 interview with Destiny's Child's Michelle Williams in* Contemporary Christian Music *magazine*

Taking Up the Cross

by Thomas Fleming

What Were the Crusades?
by Jonathan Riley-Smith
San Francisco: Ignatius Press;
128 pp., $11.95

◆

The Crusades are an increasingly controversial topic of historical debate. As much as slavery, the Civil War, and the *conquistadores*, Western Europe's attempt to recover the Holy Land has been denounced by the anti-Christian left as a quintessential expression of Western man's vileness. There are many good narrative accounts of the Crusades and many monographs that take up particular aspects—and no end of polemics. Jonathan Riley-Smith's slim volume, however, is among the rarest of books: a fair-minded attempt to judge the Crusaders by their own moral standards.

Riley-Smith's discussions of what a Crusade was, who the Crusaders were, and by what authority a knight was justified in taking up the Cross are essential tools to help modern men and women understand a phenomenon that seems as inexplicable to us as the lemmings' march to the sea. The chapter "A Just Cause" is urgently needed today, for the light it sheds on both the motives of the Crusaders and the morality of the next Western expedition to the Middle East.

The medieval theory of a just war, although it is similar in many respects to later Catholic teachings, was able to embrace not only wars of defense but wars of legitimate vengeance. While some writers (including Bernard of Clairvaux and Pope Urban II) gave the impression that any war against pagans was justified, this was far from being the consensus. Indeed, even Saint Bernard, in advocating a war without truce against the Muslims, believed that "the pagans directly threatened Christendom and it was only because there was no alternative to the use of physical force that they must be crushed if they would not be converted."

In clinging to the superstition that all religions are more or less the same, we prefer to forget the terrible nightmare that the Muslim conquest inflicted upon the Christians and Jews of the Middle East, and, if we do remember, it is only to condemn the eccentricities of the Fatimid Caliph who destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or to deplore the depredations of the Seljuk Turks. However, Muslim terrorism against Christians *preceded* their conquest of Syria and Palestine and has lasted down to the present. As Ba'at Yeor has shown, terrorism was an essential tool of conquest: A demoralized Christian population would more easily accept any terms offered by the Muslim conquerors. It is true that, after the initial bloodbath, Muslim rulers found it in their interest to preserve a tax base of nonbelievers, who were degraded to a legal position far lower and more precarious than that of a freedman in Boston in 1860. Until the arrival of the Turks, however, Muslim authorities did tolerate Christian communities and did not actively discourage European pilgrims who came, as tourists always do, to spend ready money in the local economy. It was the Seljuk Turks' renewed persecution of Christians and their militant crackdown on pilgrims that induced the Byzantine emperor (very foolishly, it would appear in hindsight) to appeal to Western Christians for help.

As time went on, Europeans took up the Cross for a variety of motives, not all of them honorable, and the longer they stayed in the Middle East, the more the Crusaders began to resemble their pagan enemies. However, as this careful and patient examination reveals, the stated purpose of the Crusades was the perfectly legitimate desire to protect Christians in the East, to reopen Christian shrines to pilgrimages, and to recover control over Christian holy places that were being desecrated by irresponsible Muslim rulers whose only title to the land was a not-so-distant conquest. Emperor John Tzimiskes had successfully reasserted Byzantine rule (albeit temporarily) over Palestine in the late tenth century. The First Crusade was preached in 1095.

Carefully researched, brilliantly argued, and clearly written, *What Were the Crusades?* is a necessary corrective to the anti-Christian propaganda that is passed off as scholarship, but it also reminds us of a time when the fierce knights of France, bolder than the men who rode with Bedford Forrest, insisted on applying Christian moral standards to their invasion of the Middle East.

Thomas Fleming is the author of Montenegro: The Divided Land *(Chronicles Press).*

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by Samuel Francis

The Strange Death of the Yellow Dog

Perusing the conservative press in the days after the Republican victories in the November 2002 elections was like watching the triumph scenes in various sword-and-sandal movies of the 1950's and 60's, with the reader almost expecting to see outgoing Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle dragged in chains through the streets of Washington. The Stupid Party is not used to winning, and, when it does, it quickly reveals that it lacks the grace and modesty that natural winners always display. Reports in conservative journals with headlines like "Bush Delivers Knockout Punch," "Bush's Winning Hand," and "Bush's Big Win" chortled happily over the news that the slowest kid on the team had finally hit a home run. The President himself and his cronies prepared to make full use of their victory to wage war against every country that Richard Perle dislikes, shovel out corporate welfare to the appropriate managerial mammoths, and finish the delicate but urgent mission of constructing a complete police state in the name of the American Creed. Since the Democrats supported most of the same policies, it made little difference which party won the elections.

Nevertheless, the professional apologists for the Republicans leapt at the opportunity to rehearse the standard propaganda line as to how the party had done it. Of course, there was the expected claim that the vast majority of Americans supported the President in his desire to rid the globe of terrorism and tyranny, but there was also the subtheme that the Republicans were able to win because George W. Bush had succeeded in constructing a new, multiracial coalition that was bleeding disgruntled minorities from the Democrats and transfusing them into sclerotic GOP arteries. Blacks, you see, were conspicuous by their absence from the polls last November, and the Democrats cannot win much of anything without the black vote. As for Hispanics, the propagandists repeated exactly what the Republican National Committee demanded they say, which is that Hispanics are turning Republican.

Thus, reporter Ellen Sorokin, in the *Washington Times*, wrote only one day after the vote that "Hispanic voters were a driving force behind the Republicans' historic win of both chambers of Congress, party officials and political analysts said yesterday." The first official she quoted was Tom Davis, chairman of the RNC, who avowed that "Their base wasn't as aroused as our base." Miss Sorokin also went on to list several races in which the Hispanic vote had supposedly gone to the Republicans and had proved decisive to their victories.

Thus, the President's brother, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, was reported as having won reelection "with more than 60 percent of the Latino vote"; New York's Gov. George Pataki, with "nearly 50 percent"; and Texas Gov. Rick Perry, with "more than one-third of the Latino vote."

The claim that the Hispanic vote can be won by Republicans is not a new one, of course. It first surfaced in the mid-1990's when the pro-immigration lobby began to grasp that the success of such grassroots immigration-restriction measures as California's Proposition 187 was threatening their endless supply of cheap labor, cheap nannies, and exotic restaurants. If only those nasty nativists like Pat Buchanan who support restricting immigration would shut up, they argued, the Republicans might actually win the Hispanic vote, but any mention of restricting immigration only alienates and offends the growing Hispanic electorate.

The claim was dubious on its face, since Hispanics had always voted for the Democrats, with the exception of the anticommunist and largely white Cuban community in Florida. Moreover, almost all polls show that Hispanics support restricting immigration by nearly as large a majority as non-Hispanics, and Proposition 187 itself won no less than a third of the Hispanic vote. California Gov. Pete Wilson, a liberal Republican who was almost universally regarded as politically defunct in 1994, wrapped himself in Proposition 187 and won reelection with 55 percent of the vote, as did five new Republican congressmen from California the same year. Yet the Open Borders lobby has never ceased regurgitating the Big Lie that Proposition 187 was a disaster for Republicans.

George W. Bush was supposed to reverse that "disaster," since he had won "nearly a majority" (or sometimes, "more than a majority") of Hispanic voters in Texas in 1998 when he ran for reelection as governor. In fact, he won probably less than 40 percent of the state's Hispanic vote in 1998 and even less than that nationally in the 2000 presidential election, in which Al Gore carried the Hispanic vote by over 65 percent.

The Republican obsession with winning Hispanics led the party not only to reject immigration control, probably the strongest and most popular issue it had in the last decade, but to propose statehood for Puerto Rico and pander shamelessly to Hispanics on every occasion. Just last year alone, as Miss Sorokin also reported,

> More than $9 million was spent by gubernatorial, Senate, and House candidates on nearly 14,000 Spanish-language television spots, setting a nationwide record for non-presidential election years and numerous statewide records.

This obsession was central to a new electoral strategy, replacing the old "Southern strategy," which sought the votes of Southern and working-class whites. Boasting to the *Washington Post* in 2000 of the glories that the new strategy promised, Ralph Reed, the former executive director of the Christian Coalition and now a Republican political consultant, said,

> This is a very different party from the party that sits down on Labor Day and cedes the black vote and cedes the Hispanic vote, and tries to drive its percentage of the white vote over 70 percent to win an election.

Yet the truth, though unpleasant for

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the architects of the new "Hispanic strategy," is that it is a total flop and that the Republican Party remains dependent on its ability to win white voters. The sheer genius of the abysmal stupidity of the party's leaders is that—yet again—they managed to miss this truth in the results of the midterm elections.

Steve Sailer, a political reporter for United Press International and a frequent contributor to *Vdare.com*, made that prediction soon after the 2000 election (as did I in this space before and after the election) and returned to it last November:

> Here's what really happened: the Republicans, benefiting from 9/11, *but also from outstanding get out* the vote campaigns in white districts . . . raked in the white votes.
>
> All the official talk about the necessity of GOP minority outreach was in effect a smokescreen for The Strategy That Dares Not Speak Its Name.

I am not sure I agree with Mr. Sailer that the Hispanic strategy is merely a "smokescreen." I am inclined to believe that Republicans of the Newt Gingrich-George W. Bush-Ralph Reed era really are dumb enough to believe that they do not need white voters, do not need to do anything to appeal to them (reduce immigration, support the Confederate flag, oppose gun control, protect industrial jobs, *etc.*), and really need to rub away the party's supposed image as "racist" or "nativist" or "insensitive" to minorities, women, and homosexuals in order to gain the votes of these electoral pigeonholes. Why else would they spend so much money and time on ads aimed at Hispanic voters, and why else would they go so far as to propose statehood for the Democratic fortress of Puerto Rico?

Mr. Sailer, however, is clearly correct that the Republican victory last fall had very little to do with Hispanic or black support. What seems to have happened is that virtually the last remaining whites in the Democratic Party simply jumped ship. Thus, a few days after the election, the *New York Times* reported that, in Maryland, where Republican Robert Ehrlich defeated Kathleen Kennedy Townsend for the governor's chair, Miss Townsend, the incumbent lieutenant governor, "lost . . . because of strong turnout in predominantly white counties." In Georgia, Sonny Perdue became the first Republican to win the governor's race in the state's history by "generating a heavy turnout in largely white rural areas." The turnout in largely white Forsyth County jumped from 20,000 in 1998 to 32,000 last year, while voting in largely white Cherokee County in Atlanta's suburbs increased by 10,000 votes over 1998. In Florida, where Miss Sorokin had claimed that Jeb Bush won with "more than 60 percent of the Latino vote," the *New York Times* reported that the governor "turned a close race into a rout largely by winning predominantly white areas where Democratic leaders thought their candidate . . . had a chance to compete." The *Times* concluded that "Democrats . . . are learning . . . that the party apparently lost thousands *of moderate white voters who supported* Bill Clinton and helped elect Southern Democratic governors in 1998 and 2000."

Claims that the Hispanic vote was an irresistible "driving force behind the Republicans' historic win" are grotesquely exaggerated. Jeb Bush did not win "more than 60 percent" of the Hispanic vote in Florida but 56 percent; until a few years ago, Republican presidential candidates in Florida routinely won around 80 percent of the state's Hispanics, largely anti-communist Cubans. Those majorities have dwindled considerably in recent years, but for a Republican candidate like Jeb Bush—brother of El Presidente (who did win a bare majority of Florida Hispanics in 2000), fluent in Spanish himself, and equipped with a Mexican wife—to win with less than 60 percent of Hispanics is something of a disgrace.

Governor Pataki also may have won "nearly 50 percent" of the New York Hispanic (largely Puerto Rican) vote, but New York City's Mayor Michael Bloomberg was able to win a majority of Hispanics in his own victory in 2001, and that is not surprising. The point is not that Hispanics are genetically wedded to the Democratic Party but that, as a low-income, low-skill, increasingly underclass social and ethnic group, they tend to vote for left-wing causes and candidates. If you want a Republican Party made up of Bloombergs and Patakis, then you can get the Hispanic vote easily enough. If you want something like the party of Robert Taft, Ronald Reagan, Jesse Helms, Barry Goldwater, and Pat Buchanan, then you probably cannot expect too many Hispanics to sign up. As for Texas Gov. Rick Perry's winning reelection with "more than one-third of the Latino vote," that is *on par with George W. Bush winning* around 39 percent of Texas Hispanics in 1998 and approximates what Republican presidential candidates have historically won from Hispanics nationally. (The high-water mark of Hispanic support for Republicans is usually considered to be the 37 percent that Reagan won in 1984.)

Mr. Sailer concludes that "all it took" for the "Sailer strategy" to work was "an imminent war to which whites responded with more interest in foreign policy, as should surprise no one." This assumes, however, that white voters are overwhelmingly enthusiastic about a projected war with Iraq, and I detect no such enthusiasm: Support for the war does not significantly distinguish Republicans from Democrats. The Democrats may have a few *peacenik spoilsports like* Al Gore, *but, in* general, they are even more in bed with the War Party than the Republicans are. They have no leader today who is as pro-Arab as George McGovern was pro-Hanoi in 1972, and I doubt that very many white Democrats defected from the party last year because they found its current foreign-policy positions repellent.

My own guess as to why Republicans did so well among white voters last year is that, at last, even the vanishing Yellow Dog is beginning to understand that the party he and his forefathers supported for generations is no longer theirs, that it now belongs to Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Mario Obledo, and Maxine Waters, and those white leaders who were willing to sell the party and the country to them. Clean-cut and plausible young men with Southern accents like Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and Al Gore can mask that reality only so long, but when they no longer take center stage every day, the truth comes out. Mr. Sailer reported in one of his UPI analyses that the Gallup organization had remarked that "By far the largest divide among American voters continues to be racial"—and so it is. "Gallup discovered that right before the election whites favored the Republicans by a 20-point margin: 58 percent to 38 percent." Even that gulf is not as wide as the one separating nonwhites from the Republican Party; but it reveals the trend—not toward the Rainbow Republicanism of Ralph Reed, Jack Kemp, Newt Gingrich, and George W. Bush but toward a political culture that is and will remain for generations to come divided along racial lines—a deep and angry scar on the face of the American nation that will be the main legacy of the mass immigration the Republicans refused to halt while there was still a chance. c

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by Scott P. Richert

A Road to Nowhere

"That's my toll booth," Tom Ditzler says, laughing when his wife, Jan, mentions the portable toilet that the county has left stationed on an island in the road. "Every car has to drop a quarter in as they pass by."

This November day is bitter, in more ways than one. After almost three years of legal battles and construction snafus, the Harrison-Springfield extension—a massive four-lane road that completes a loop around Rockford—has finally opened to traffic. Reports from the ribbon-cutting ceremony this morning caused a stir among local activists, when a caller to a radio talk show claimed that he had seen Tom embracing Kris Cohn, the Winnebago County Board chairman who has pursued the extension with an intensity bordering on the demonic. While the Ditzlers had received an invitation from the county to attend the ribbon-cutting (a slap in the face that is typical of Winnebago County under her current chairman), Cohn is more likely to reconvert to her ancestral Catholicism than Tom is to hug her: Cohn's "leadership" on this issue cost Ditzler, a veteran who lost his sight serving in the U.S. Army, more than half of his 17-acre homestead, which was taken from him through a particularly nasty form of eminent domain called "quick take" (see "For Keeps! A Christian Defense of Property," *Views*, April 2001). Now, the road runs a few dozen feet from his front door. One of his few consolations may be that his tollbooth is unlikely to bring him more than coffee money, since traffic—wildly optimistic estimates of 6,000 cars per day from the county notwithstanding—is extremely light here on opening day.

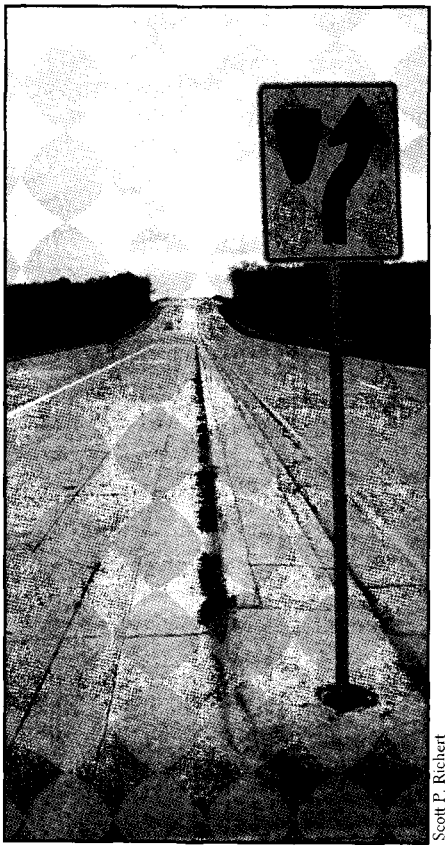
As Aaron Wolf and I commiserate with the Ditzlers, a reporter from a local TV station saunters across all four lanes and back again, not even bothering to watch out for cars. He has no need to worry; he's more likely to be struck by lightning in the middle of the road. The previous section of the Harrison-Springfield extension—a mile or so of concrete heading west-northwest from South Main Street—has been open for several years, and it is still so desolate that children could play football in the road without fear. The concrete, however, is already beginning to crack—more proof of the quality workmanship of local public-works contractors such as Rockford Blacktop (whose motto is "Paving the Planet for Over 55 Years." As Dave Barry would say, I'm not making this up. See the logo on their website, *www.rockfordblacktop.com*).

Rockford Blacktop has suffered several embarrassments during the construction of the Harrison-Springfield extension, most notably when a 66-foot stretch of pavement in the west-northwest lanes simply fell in after the marshy ground beneath it gave way, probably because of the winter frost melting. While Blacktop and the county tried to play down the trouble, the Ditzlers—who, unlike the county engineers, knew their own land and had predicted such problems—say that trucks were dumping fill in the hole constantly for weeks. Even now, the trouble spot is obvious, partly because the concrete is newer and lighter-colored, and partly because cracks have begun to appear in the eastbound lanes directly across from the hole.

Under Illinois' quick-take legislation, the county was able to seize the Ditzler's land without paying them in advance. After multiple court appearances, including the trial of their daughter, Christina, for supposedly throwing mud at a sheriff's deputy on the day that the bulldozers started tearing up their land (she was found not guilty), the Ditzlers finally grew tired and settled for about $105,000—$63,485 for the confiscated land, and another $41,515 "in lieu of replacing a bridge over Kent Creek that was torn down during the highway construction," as the local Gannett paper phrased it. (Note the passive language: "was torn down." By whom? Did they have a right to tear it down? The bridge, as well as numerous trees that were cut down along the banks of the creek, was entirely on land not seized by the county. Let nothing and no one stand in the way of the passive march of progress.)

When Tom and Jan invite us inside, we are reminded of perhaps the greatest

of their consolations: A constant stream of friends and well-wishers, many of whom rallied around them during their long battle, flows in and out of their door. While they thank us profusely for the national attention that *Chronicles* brought to their case, our actions were minor compared to the hundreds of hours that others spent in the vain attempt to help them save their land. The local politicians and land developers whose blind trusts control the property along the Harrison-Springfield extension may make a killing off of the new road, but their wealth will always pale alongside of the human riches that Tom, Jan, and Christina Ditzler enjoy.



Scott P. Richert

Traffic floods the Harrison-Springfield extension on opening day

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Letter From London

by Andrei Navrozov

A Way of Dreaming

◆

Another eventful night at Aspinalls, and, somewhere between four in the morning and daybreak, for the thousandth time, I catch myself asking the same thing. How do I explain to a normal person, to a disinterested layman who has never walked down Curzon Street, what goes on in the gambler's soul? Doubtless this can be done, but as with just about every difficult question worth pondering, it would be best to begin somewhere far afield. At any rate, it would be good to begin *somewhere*, which is always the toughest part for anybody who wants to tell the whole perplexing truth, especially when what he's used to telling, for the most part, are the facile lies gangsters slip their molls in old movies.

There are people who spend their whole life in a state of agitation that they perceive as sexual, but which a detached onlooker regards as sad, mad, and manipulative. While a university student, I once had dinner with an inordinately plain woman whom her elderly mother, an internationally known scholar of Old English and among the few professors to give me the time of day, had implored me to meet. At the close of the evening, I had to throw the cunning madwoman out of my rooms by force and lead her across the road to her Volkswagen Beetle with her arms behind her back, like a prisoner. The car wouldn't start, of course, and, for the rest of my life, I shall treasure the malodorous memory of the contest twixt virtue and dignity, as I pushed the bloody Beetle for a block and a half along the leafy, and mercifully level, avenue of the moonlit New England town.

I submit that, in order to begin to understand what goes on in the soul of the man born to play, a layman could do worse than to enter the mind of the woman I so cruelly turned out of doors. Typically, a person of this sort is distinguished by what I would call obsessive semiotic confusion, in that he has eyes only for the social, cultural, and biological signs that are either wholly imaginary or are there to project the very opposite of his mental constructions. The inner fool's paradise of such an individual may be seen as a kind of Tower of Babel, where the gestures of all cultures and the words of all languages commingle to lend luxurious substance to images that would germinate and spring forth anyway, of their own accord and in utter silence.

In a typical scenario, which I reproduce here from real life, a woman thus afflicted meets a man and his wife, and, from the first, the wife appears distant; "she is disturbed by my presence," observes the woman, "because she is desperate to go to bed with me"; then the husband, too, seems unfriendly; "he is jealous of me," the woman decides; then the wife goes out of the room because she can no longer endure the guest's tiresome presence; "she wants to leave the two of us alone," reasons the woman, "so we can start an affair, and then she can be with me as much as she likes"; but the husband is still morose and keeps looking at his watch; "he does not accept his wife's compromise," thrills the woman, "he wants me all to himself; just look, now he's yawning to show he isn't afraid of the consequences!"

All this sounds perfectly nasty, and of course the gambler's paradise is similarly open to derision. But let me tell it from another point of view. In 1928, a famous and pompous literary critic whose name, happily, is now mud, quoted a Pasternak stanza that I would render into English as follows:

> What is it? The Cloister of Kiev
> Cupolas sleep? Or the Eddas,
> Revealed by the north and
> wreathed
> With pearls of primordial madness?

"Here one simply does not know which to rejoice in first," the critic ridiculed the poet, "the pearls, the primordial madness, or the revealing of them both. It may be, of course," he went on, "that Pasternak does not rejoice in any of these words alone but only in their accumulation and disorder." And finally:

> He is bent on one thing: to combine, in the smallest possible space and by whatever means are at hand, the greatest possible number of heterogenous, unrelated, disparate words. For him, poetry means above all a confusion of tongues, the building of a Tower of Babel.

It is of small importance to the argument here that, in my view, Boris Pasternak is that culmination of genius by whose verse world culture will be reckoned for millennia to come. My point, rather, is that the obsessive semiotic confusion so easily diagnosed in self-condemned erotomaniacs—and which, I believe, is a requisite component of the largely unknown, or misunderstood, worldview of self-confessed gamblers—is so very near to the heart of what we know as the poetic sensibility, which is above all else the stubbornness to see things as one would see them anyway, all the while ransacking the phenomenal world for signs and gestures that deck out these preposterously subjective perceptions in a sort of magpie reality. The result is a phantom truth, though one as maddeningly logical as it is luxuriously tactile.

When we read serious poetry, we call this phantom truth *beauty*. When we look inside the gambler's mind, we are not so sure what to call it, and straightaway we dismiss it as stupidity, illusion, dreaming. Yet is not all poetry, in the eyes of a philistine moron, just as much stupidity, illusion, and dreaming? Oh, those heavenly numbers. Ah, those pretty phrases. Get a life! Or, failing that, get a job.

Here is Dostoevsky at 40, as ever unemployed, and more penniless than ever after the gaming tables of Wiesbaden, in a private letter that contains the first reference to the gestation of *The Gambler* and to the type of Russian expatriate that is to become its protagonist:

> I take an original type, a man who is highly cultivated, yet in everything incomplete, one who is done believing yet *dares not to disbelieve*, one who rebels against authority yet fears it too. He reassures himself that there is nothing left for him in Russia. . . . This is a living personage—I see him as though he were standing before me now—

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and, once he has been written, he will have to be read. The main point is that all his life juices, energies, ferocity, courage have gone into roulette. He is a gambler, but not merely a gambler. . . . He is a kind of poet, one who is ashamed of his poetry because he deeply feels its baseness, despite his having been ennobled in his own eyes by his inner obligation to *risk*.

A long way away from the modern mass image of the gambler—the Atlantic City slot-machine queen, the Vegas loudmouth who got hold of a pay packet or two too many, the Azerbaijani money launderer at Monte Carlo—Dostoevsky's protagonist exists to this day and can still be seen, sometimes in broad daylight, with his battered *porte-monnaie* of arrogance, faith, self-loathing, and occasionally cash, among the shadows of Curzon Street. Open the page of any edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* to "Roulette"; you will not find him there. Check the internet; you will only find "casino systems" and invitations to electronic raffles. Ask some of your closest friends; certainly they will think you've gone barkers and will be happy to tell you so.

But here, in these windowless tombs, these clockless wombs hung in emerald-green velvet and furnished with Empire bronzes deep in the belly of Mayfair, I watch with him nightly; I light my cigarettes as he lights his; I feel his triumphs, and I am downcast at his dejection. He is still alive, the deluded poet and self-made dreamer, with the ever-shrinking pile of marble-cool markers before him, like Balzac's *peau de chagrin*, representing all his unearthly desire. He stirs, and a uniformed lackey arrives with a new ashtray; he looks up, and a comely maiden enters to refresh him with exotic fruit; and, meanwhile, his desire, all the while that unearthly desire of his, is running through his neatly manicured fingers like arterial blood from a hopeless wound.

Like the erotomaniac, he is, of course, an obsessive neurotic, a parasitic figure of fun whom society—even civilized society—may easily frogmarch out the door to peals of derisive laughter, as I myself did that poor deluded woman all those years ago. Like the poet, however, he is a sacred anachronism, a living memorial to the world as it once was, and woe betide the blind-hearted, mean-spirited, hypocritical culture that should choose to pretend that his longings are calculable, that his dreams are absurd, and, besides, that he simply never existed.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

Letter From California

by Roger D. McGrath

Fighting the Good Fight

"Save your fundraising mailing lists, for the San Fernando Valley shall rise again." For now, secession has failed. In the November 2002 elections, a referendum to separate the Valley from the City of Los Angeles and to create the City of San Fernando Valley passed 51 to 49 percent in the Valley but lost 67 to 33 percent in the total Los Angeles vote. "My reaction is, the Valley won," said Richard Close, one of several leaders of the Valley secession movement. For Close, the narrow win in the Valley was "a moral victory." Keith Richman, a Republican state assemblyman from Granada Hills in the Valley, felt much the same way. He would have been mayor of the new city, had it been created. Out of a field of ten, he received nearly 53 percent of the vote. The second-highest vote recipient received less than 12 percent.

An analysis of the election and of exit polls reveals two inescapable facts: First, as long as the entire City of Los Angeles is allowed to vote on the secession of the Valley, the creation of a separate Valley city is doomed; second, white residents of the Valley voted overwhelmingly in favor of secession. The first point is being discussed at length publicly. The second point is usually mentioned only in private conversations.

The Valley is a cash cow for the City of Los Angeles. Some months before the election, a state commission decreed that, if the Valley were successful in its secession drive, it would have to pay Los Angeles $129 million in alimony. This created one of the ironies of the campaign. Mayor James Hahn and the powerbrokers in Los Angeles, who proclaimed they were for a "united Los Angeles," told the poorer parts of the city that, should the Valley secede, they would be robbed of revenues with a resulting loss of essential services. The L.A. forces then went over the hill into the poorer parts of the Valley and told the people there that they could not survive without the support of Los Angeles.

Antisecessionist rallies featured all the usual suspects—city-hall insiders, downtown business interests, black and Latino "community leaders," public-employee unions, and rent-control advocates. They all feared that the public trough would be downsized. Some of the suspects were apartment-dwelling old folks from the Valley. They had been told repeatedly by the L.A. propaganda machine that, should the Valley separate, they would be living on the streets, because the new city would end rent control. For a while, it looked as if a schism might develop among blacks. Secessionists argued that, without the Valley, blacks in Los Angeles would have far greater power. Several prominent black figures began to suggest that it might not be a bad idea to let the Valley go, and a few of them even mentioned starting a secession movement of their own and creating a separate city out of South-Central Los Angeles. "In a new L.A.," said Geoffrey Garfield, a black supporter of secession, "the voting age population of African Americans in Los Angeles will double, thereby doubling the political power of the African American community." The flirtation with the secessionists was short-lived, however. The thought of losing some of the largesse provided by the taxpayers of the Valley quickly trumped everything else.

"Secession is bad for the African-American community and all people of color," Mayor Hahn told the Urban Affairs Forum. "The African-American community will be left behind with less clout in Sacramento, less clout in Washington. . . . We will be left behind in a city that has been financially ruined." Herb Wesson, a black state assemblyman, argued that Los Angeles used its clout as the nation's second-most-populous city to secure $400 million in federal poverty-relief money. "I don't know if they would come up with $400 million if we were not the second-largest city," declared Wesson. And Norman Johnson, executive director of the local chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, claimed that "A breakup of the city would cause damage in South Los Angeles." This was evidently enough for the Greater Los Angeles African-American

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Chamber of Commerce; the Rev. Cecil Murray of First AME Church; Juanita Tate of Concerned Citizens of South Los Angeles; Geraldine Washington, president of the local chapter of the NAACP; and dozens of other black civic, political, and religious leaders, who declared that they would stand united against secession.

Mayor Hahn and his L.A. United organization outspent their counterparts, Valley VOTE (Voters Organized Toward Empowerment) nine to one. Those who fund city political campaigns and do business with the City of Los Angeles contributed most of the money to L.A. United. Ed Roski, Jr., one of the developers of Staples Center, donated $250,000; real-estate mogul Eli Broad gave $102,000; Jerry Perenchio of Univision contributed $100,000. The L.A. Arena Co., in which Philip Anschutz has a major interest, donated $50,000. Anschutz is now negotiating with the city to build a concert hall, a football stadium, and a hotel.

As long as the Valley produces far more in taxes for the city than it consumes in services, and as long as downtown business interests, racial factions, and public-employee unions can raise money and marshal their forces, the Valley will lose a citywide vote. Recognizing this, secessionists are now contemplating waging a battle in court to overturn the provision in state law requiring an entire city to vote on a secession petition rather than only that portion of a city wishing to separate. They may also lobby the state legislature to enact a law that would allow a Valley-only vote on the question of secession and independent cityhood.

"We sent a loud message," said Jeff Brain, the president of Valley VOTE. "But it was only Chapter 1." Despite Brain's bravado, the election could be the final chapter. A lawsuit would be enormously expensive, and the chances of the secessionists prevailing in court are remote. An even more daunting task would face Valley VOTE lobbyists in Sacramento. The state government and the legislature are controlled by Democrats, whose pet constituencies include all the usual suspects.

Moreover, a dramatic change in Valley demographics suggests that the secession movement came too late. Even if the secessionists prevail in court or the legislature, they might not be able to win a majority of the local vote next time around. Since 1990, nearly 130,000 whites have moved out of the Valley, and more than 180,000 Latinos have moved in. With the U.S.-Mexican border wide open and President Bush promoting yet another amnesty for illegal aliens, there is no reason to think that the trend will not continue. In another decade, it is likely that whites will be a minority in the Valley, an area where, as recently as the 1960's, they made up more than 90 percent of the population. Latinos now account for one third of the Valley's population; blacks, another eight percent; and Asians, five percent.

Exit polls and surveys conducted by the Valley's newspaper of record, the *Daily News*, and by the *Los Angeles Times* clearly suggest that nonwhites in the Valley are overwhelmingly against secession. Those who do support secession argue that local control would increase services in poor neighborhoods. "If the Valley controlled its own money, maybe we could tend to the roads and graffiti and make all the neighborhoods a little better," said Fred Plascencia, a Latino resident of Canoga Park.

By contrast, the same polls and surveys suggest that whites are overwhelmingly in favor of secession, with self-described liberal Democrats the only exceptions. "I distrust the anti-progressive forces behind secession," said William Cartwright, a TV editor from Encino. "I feel like a citizen of the city at large." More typical of whites is Irvin Park, a conservative Republican from Northridge, who settled in the Valley after fighting in World War II. "I'm just not happy with what I'm seeing," said the active secessionist. "I'd like to move someplace where there's a little, small town, probably Oregon or Washington or someplace like that. I think the Valley is overgrown."

Echoing Park's sentiments is Virginia Tucker, a Republican who has lived in the Valley since the 1950's. A strong supporter of secession, she has watched her Van Nuys neighborhood turn from a safe and friendly "paradise" into a dirty, crime-ridden slum. "Gangs are getting out of hand," she laments. "Graffiti is everywhere. When I moved here, there was no graffiti. People took care of their yards. It was just a more friendly neighborhood. We're so multicultural now, you know. There are language barriers. So many new people are coming in now that a lot of them hesitate to get friendly." Nor do they get friendly with one another. Van Nuys is now rocked by warfare between gangs of Mexicans and gangs of Salvadorans, and drug dealing, robbery, and murder are on the rise. The miscreants in Tucker's neighborhood of the 1950's stole hubcaps and drag-raced on Van Nuys Boulevard.

In the wake of the vote, Mayor Hahn has rediscovered the Valley. In mid-December of last year, ignoring the threat of overcast skies and traffic, he negotiated Cahuenga Pass and crossed the Santa Monica Mountains to emerge unscathed onto the broad plain of the San Fernando Valley. Speaking before a crowd of 300 at the annual meeting of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, Hahn vowed to respond to the needs of the Valley. "Gone are the days of a Los Angeles government bunkered down in the marbled corridors of City Hall," he said. "Today, more than ever, residents and business owners have a voice in shaping the direction of their neighborhoods. . . . The debate on whether or not the city of Los Angeles should remain one city changed Los Angeles and has changed the way the city does business."

Wanna bet?

Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.

LIBERAL ARTS

IMMIGRANT FAMILY VALUES

"A new Center for Immigration Studies report, *An Examination of U.S. Immigration Policy and Serious Crime*, by Carl Horowitz, takes a hard look at this issue and concludes that crime involving immigrants is significantly underreported. . . . Among the reasons for this underreporting:

"—Some immigrant cultures view family crime as a 'family matter,' and hence not something that ought to concern police

"—Many victims are fearful, however mistakenly, that contacting local police could result in deportation . . . "

—from a May 2001 press release from the Center for Immigration Studies

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by Srdja Trifkovic

Pakistan, Our Untrustworthy Partner

As the first contingent of U.N. weapons inspectors arrived in Iraq last November, U.S. government sources leaked a disturbing story about one of our key "allies" in the War on Terror. Pakistan apparently has been helping North Korea with her nuclear-weapons program for years, in return for missile technology that would strengthen her own hand against India. According to the *New York Times*, the illicit relationship "now appears much deeper and more dangerous than the United States and its Asian allies first suspected." Kim Jong Il's regime provided its partners in Islamabad with the missile parts they need to build a nuclear arsenal capable of reaching every strategic site in India, while, in return, Pakistan provided Pyongyang with the designs for gas centrifuges and much of the machinery it needs to make enriched uranium for its nuclear-weapons project, which would threaten South Korea, Japan, and 100,000 American troops in the region.

The disclosure about Islamabad's nuclear ties to Pyongyang came in the wake of an unclassified CIA analysis stating that North Korea could now build several plutonium bombs and add one every year until about 2005. By the middle of the decade, she could produce enough plutonium to make up to 50 bombs per year. This estimate does not include additional bombs that could be made under Pyongyang's covert uranium-enrichment program, which could begin producing fuel enough for up to two uranium bombs per year by 2005. This capacity is the direct result of Pakistan providing North Korea with key designs. The CIA report also disclosed that, last July, U.S. intelligence detected a Pakistani aircraft taking on a secret cargo of ballistic-missile parts at a North Korean airfield. The shipment was brazen, in full view of American spy satellites, but the mode of transport added insult to injury: The Pakistani plane was an American-built C-130; it belonged to the same U.S.-supplied military machine that General Musharraf had pledged a year ago to use against Al Qaeda.

A week later, it was disclosed that the father of Pakistan's nuclear program offered Iraq help in building an atomic bomb on the eve of the Gulf War. In a letter seized by the United Nations in 1995 and dated October 6, 1990—but leaked to the AP only last December—Saddam's secret service wrote to Iraq's nuclear-weapons department: "We've enclosed for you the following proposal from Pakistani scientist, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, regarding the possibility of helping Iraq establish a project to enrich uranium and manufacture nuclear weapons." According to the letter, the Iraqis were told by a middleman that Khan was "prepared to give us project designs for nuclear bombs." The middleman would "ensure any requirements of materials from Western European companies, via a company he owns in Dubai" (in the United Arab Emirates). In a report to the Security Council on February 9, 1999, the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed that Iraq had received an offer "to provide, for financial reward, assistance and information on nuclear weapons design, weapons-usable nuclear material production and the procurement of critical components and materials."

The disclosure that Pakistan may have offered to make Saddam's and North Korea's nuclear dreams come true even after siding with the United States against the Taliban is not surprising; her nuclear mischief has been known for decades. Still, it is remarkable that, while the Bush administration was ready to go to war with Iraq because of her alleged "weapons of mass destruction" and has put pressure on Kim Jong Il's regime to abandon its nuclear project, Washington has so far refrained from public discussion of the role of Pakistan in making North Korea's nuclear program possible.

The reason for such restraint is usually assumed to be the administration's view that Pakistan is a key player in the War on Terror, but things have simply gone too far. Even before these disclosures, it had become evident that Musharraf would not reverse Pakistan's adoption of militant Islamic ideology. He has not made peace with India, and he is unwilling to break with the tradition of his predecessors, most notably Gen. Zia-ul-Haq.

In light of the North Korean connection, the Bush administration should keep any future political and economic rewards to Musharraf clearly conditional on his behavior. Pakistan is not a reliable ally of the United States. On the other hand, in at least one respect, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the People's Democratic Republic of Korea are natural allies: Both detest the West more than they distrust each other. Their cooperation is possible because both Islam and communism are quasireligious totalitarian ideologies, just as Islam and Nazism were natural and active allies for a decade before 1945.

This reality is blurred by the fact that, in the aftermath of September 11, General Musharraf allowed the United States to use Pakistani air bases. He garnered praise from President Bush and improved U.S.-Pakistani relations, which had deteriorated since the end of the Cold War. His stage-managed "referendum," which provided him with a veneer of legality, was quietly overlooked. The United States dropped its economic sanctions (imposed because of Pakistan's nuclear program), committed up to $600 million in credits and aid, and encouraged the IMF to give Pakistan a substantial loan. The subsequent abduction and murder of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl only temporarily upset General Musharraf's efforts to portray his country as not beholden to Islamic extremism.

General Musharraf's army is commanded by officers whose loyalties are divided at best. They have allowed countless Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters to slip across the border from Afghanistan into Pakistan and to stay out of the U.S. military's reach. Osama bin Laden himself may be hiding inside Pakistan and enjoying the protection of sympathetic officers. While General Musharraf's cooperation was helpful to the military campaign in Afghanistan, the Pakistani military was loath to risk firefights with their erstwhile Taliban clients and allies. Musharraf's gov-

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ernment has ordered the release of many Islamic militants detained after September 11, and it has backtracked on its promise to control the Islamic schools that are breeding new terrorists.

General Musharraf fits in with the political tradition of Pakistan since her earliest days. She was the first modern state to be established on openly Islamic principles: Even her name, "Land of the Pure," implies that only Muslims are true citizens. Always on the verge of bankruptcy, she has, for most of her 55 years of existence, been under military dictatorships. None of her leaders has ever left power voluntarily. Some were executed on trumped-up charges, notably Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. His executioner, Muslim Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, the military dictator of Pakistan for 11 years until 1988, introduced *sharia* after a bogus referendum. After Zia was killed in a plane crash, Ali Bhutto's daughter Benazir promised a new dawn for Pakistan; it now appears, however, that she—not one of her military predecessors or successors—initiated the contacts with North Korea that produced the current swap of nuclear technology for missiles.

The Taliban and other Islamic terrorist movements were born of ideas conceived on the battlefields of Afghanistan and spread by Pakistan's political, military, and religious establishment. These movements enjoyed the support of the Pakistani military-intelligence structures, especially its 40,000-strong Inter-Service Intelligence Agency (ISI). During the 2001 U.S. war in Afghanistan, U.S. intelligence admitted to having no idea "which side of the street they're playing on," an opinion echoed by former ISI chief Hamid Gul—a vociferous defender of the Taliban—who freely admits that "it is unnatural to expect the ISI to act against what it knows are Pakistan's best interests"—*i.e.*, helping its Islamic brethren. Pakistan has, for decades, supported terrorism through its Kashmiri surrogates controlled by the ISI. Bombings at the Srinagar legislature and the Delhi parliament, which killed dozens of people and brought two countries to the brink of war last year, were committed by Muslim terrorist groups with Pakistani connections.

The facts surrounding Pakistan's nuclear program have long been clouded by the denial and the feigned optimism that have characterized Washington's relations with the Muslim world for decades. A rare exception occurred on June 1, 2001, when Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage expressed concern that the Pakistani nuclear labs—the Khan Research Laboratory and the Pakistan Atomic Energy Agency—might be spreading nuclear technology to North Korea. Pakistani officials denied the charges, and September 11 promptly shifted the scales in their favor. By November 2001, when he came to Islamabad, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld even declared that the Bush administration was not concerned about the potential for misuse of Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

Rumsfeld's soothing words reflected either political expediency or wishful thinking: He knows that Pakistan tried to evade American scrutiny of her nuclear program for decades—a program that dates back to 1972, following her third war with India. The program was ostensibly peaceful (that is how they all start), with Canada supplying a reactor, heavy water, and a production facility. In 1974, however, Western suppliers embargoed nuclear exports to Pakistan, suspecting her true agenda, and, in 1976, Canada stopped supplying nuclear fuel. The following year, the United States halted economic and military aid over what was by then a full-fledged nuclear-weapons program. In 1979, the United States imposed economic sanctions when Pakistan was caught importing equipment for its uranium-enrichment plant at Kahuta. Arab states, however, came to the rescue. Libya provided funds and access to clandestinely obtained Western European technologies, while Saudi Arabia gave Pakistan money and access to U.S.-made supercomputers.

Long before President Bush's appeasement in the wake of September 11, the Reagan administration, following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, turned a blind eye to Pakistan's transgressions, lifted sanctions, and gave her a lot of money. By 1983, the CIA suspected that China had supplied Pakistan with a bomb design. Pakistan subsequently made cores for several nuclear weapons and completed a 40-megawatt heavy-water reactor that provided a source of plutonium-bearing spent fuel that was not subjected to international inspections. On May 28, 1998, Pakistan detonated a string of nuclear devices and became the first Islamic country to join the nuclear club. The jubilant masses poured into the streets of Pakistan to cheer the news, shouting "*Allahu Akbar!*" and carrying models of Pakistan's nuclear missile labeled "Islamic bomb." At Friday prayers, the mullahs applauded the tests as a "triumph for Islam."

The question that has vexed the U.S. intelligence community ever since is not whether there will be a nuclear exchange between Pakistan and India, but what will happen if some of Pakistan's assets—two-dozen warheads, not counting fissionable material—fall into the wrong hands. They could be stolen by officers or renegade scientists sympathetic to the extremists and used as crude terror devices. In 2001, U.S. intelligence officers were alarmed by the disclosure that two retired Pakistani nuclear scientists had connections to the Taliban. Both men, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Chaudry Abdul Majid, spent their careers at the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, working on weapons-related projects. Designing a simple device is not difficult for such experts if the fuel is at hand. Even a crude "suitcase" weapon could kill thousands of people and render a large city uninhabitable for years.

As an avowedly Muslim state, Pakistan suffers from the many defects inherent in her origins, including underdevelopment, illiteracy, oppression, and poverty. As long as the country's Islamic character is explicitly upheld, Pakistan cannot develop an efficient economy or build a civilized polity. As long as she is officially designated an "Islamic Republic," she will remain a country in which girls as young as five are auctioned off to the highest bidder. As Pakistani journalist Najum Mushtaq points out, "In official as well as public parlance, [the] ideology of Pakistan and Islamic ideology are interchangeable phrases."

The U.S. policy of undue reliance on General Musharraf—who is guilty of seeking and spreading real weapons of mass destruction and is evidently lukewarm about clamping down on Islamic extremism—should be reassessed. It may be necessary for the United States to deal with him for now, lest someone even less palatable take his place, but he must, at least, be read the riot act and kept on a very short leash. He will obey, as he has nowhere else to go, because his Libyan and Saudi bankrollers are rightly squeamish about illicit deals in these turbulent times. It would be folly, however, to pretend that he is—or can ever be—America's reliable and trusted ally. ◁

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

Axis to Grind

by John Kilgore

Terrorists have turned down the heat in my office. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the economy took a header, tax revenues in Illinois declined, and my university's budget was cut. One of our cost-saving measures has been to turn down thermostats all across campus. Supposedly, this heat recision is targeted to just 68 degrees, but the register in my office, perhaps in an excess of patriotism, has taken us as low as 63.

So when my grandchild—sex still unknown, due in three weeks or so—gets old enough to ask, "What did you do in the War on Terror, Granddad?" I will know just what to say: "Kid, I hope you never have to go through it. I sat in my office and *shivered*. There were days when I never took off my sweater-vest."

Of course, I may have opportunities for more substantial heroism before then. I may be within 50 miles of ground zero when someone finally sets off a backpack nuke. I may be on the wrong airplane, anywhere in the world, at the wrong time. Biological weapons may finally reach the steep part of their development curve, the way computers did 30 years ago, with the result that North America becomes safe once again for the wolf and the buffalo. In any of these cases, unfortunately, I will not be around to brag.

Shiver, shiver.

If I can joke about such things, however lamely, it is a measure of the relative calm and good fortune that have prevailed since September 11. The Taliban has come down like a rotten house of cards. Our bombs have mostly hit the bad men with bandoliers and turbans, not the hungry children in hospitals. Despite several mysterious national alerts, no further attacks (unless we count the Washington, D.C., snipers) have taken place in the United States, encouraging the cheery thought that the CIA or FBI must actually have thwarted a plot or two. Nuclear weapons have not been detonated in Islamabad, New Delhi, the West Bank, or Detroit. Most of the world is still mostly on our side. Normalcy has so far resumed that a single death—Daniel Pearl's—can preoccupy us for weeks at a time.

Any tendency toward celebration, however, gets cut off at the knees by the macabre unpredictability and disconnectedness of this postmodern "war"—and by the suspicion that security itself may be the most dangerous of emotions. Secure self-confidence is what we felt on September 10, 2001, and on December 6, 1941. It is what Europeans felt in the spring of 1914, on the brink of a two-stage apocalypse, after a century of peace. Feelings of security are *dangerous*. Much better to invest in paranoia, which has performed splendidly since August 6, 1945. My generation grew up with the ghastly, unspoken conviction that World War III was past due any time after 1966 and that, when it came, it would be over in an hour or two. As long as we believed this, it didn't happen: faith-healing in reverse.

But if we no longer believe it, will it happen after all? And is paranoia really paranoia if you hope it will protect you?

As the splendid little war in Afghanistan continues to wind down and another one gears up, the question suddenly upon us is, "What next?" In last year's State of the Union Address, President Bush seemed to answer all too clearly, defining Iraq, Iran, and North Korea—in a phrase certain to appear in future history textbooks, if there *is* a future—as an "Axis of Evil." As Hendrik Hertzberg noted in the *New Yorker*, this very calculated language tropes on both of our last two major wars—the short hot one that defeated the Axis powers from 1941 to '45, and the long cold one that vanquished the "Evil Empire" of global communism from 1945 to '89. Just short of an ultimatum, it is language to threaten foes with, language to rally your own troops by. Tough, tough talk, the merits of which, frustratingly, can be assessed only in the light of information not publicly available. Jimmy Carter has said it will "take years to repair the damage" done by the phrase; since September 11, however, it is hard to question the wisdom of preemption. If Saddam Hussein really does have fully weaponized anthrax and sleeper operatives with access to crop dusters, the President's language is not too reckless but too cautious. How is anyone to know?

What an English teacher can do, though, is appraise metaphors; and, from my angle, things don't look so good. Mussolini's original phrase referred *just* to Germany and Italy, making good geographical sense in view of their midway position between Russia and the Western Allies. An "axis" is the thing at the center around which other things revolve. The figure no longer worked visually when Japan came into the war, but it persisted through usage, even among the Allies, who perhaps began to construe it differently, as referring to the centralization of power *within* the fascist states. (Conceivably, there was even a buried pun on the ax bundled up in the Roman *fasces*, from which fascism got its name.)

Right off, Bush's recasting of the figure confronts us with two troublesome incongruities: the impossibility of *seeing* anything axis-like in the position of these three countries on the map; and the vast disproportion between such rogue states and the terrifying fascist empires of the early 20th century. Try to envision Saddam or Kim Jong Il in Hitler's place, and you get Dickens: tiny feet in huge boots, sleeves flapping down past the fingertips. The whole thing has the feel of imprecision and anachronism, of misplaced and slightly meretricious enthusiasm. At worst, it looks like sheer scapegoating. In this frontless struggle against faceless infiltrators, this environment of random and sporadic but increasingly lethal violence, "bad nations" are no longer the essential problem, and I had thought that Bush, in September and October, was saying as much, when he warned us to prepare for a long, obscure, twilight struggle. Now, I fear that he may be reverting to the tattered script of World War II, with its compressed time frame, clear endgame, and satisfying catharsis.

We may be hunting for a nationalist solution in a postnationalist world. Even before September 11, I would have argued that bad nations were not so much humanity's worst problem, nor even such other promising contenders as racism, social injustice, environmental degradation, drugs, or religious fanaticism, but weapons, the worst demon in a horrific bunch. The shift has been a long time coming. From the first, really, weapons

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have imposed a terrible literalism on what sociobiologists call "threat behavior," precipitating *Homo sapiens* into the role of killer when all he truly wants is to howl and pound his chest a bit. The problem has grown worse with each turn of the technological wheel, until finally it hardly matters whether we are filled with loving-kindness: We have simply grown too dangerous. After the Columbine massacre, someone said, "We have always had angry, crazy young men; the difference now is that they can get automatic weapons." In just the same way, the cataclysms of the 20th century can be parsed as fundamentally technological rather than nationalist or ideological. The heart of the dilemma is not how badly nations or creeds have hated one another but the efficiency with which weaponry has translated such feelings into mountains of corpses. Of course, it is hard to account for the full bestiality of Nazism and Stalinism in such terms; those creeds and others like them, however, stemmed in part from the trauma of "excess lethality" on the battlefield, and their butcher bureaucracies played a role analogous to that of modern weapons, facilitating murder while diffusing responsibility for it.

All of this is old hat. But since September 11, it seems that the principle must be broadened to include not just weapons but technology in general, our whole modern way of life. It was not nukes that brought down the Twin Towers but box-cutters, airplanes, and, above all, what looks less like religious fanaticism in the old sense than a new technology, perhaps more fearsome than all the rest: I mean that set of repeatable methods whereby various modern organizations (including our own military) can now produce efficient, reliable, high-quality killers. Nuclear weapons have played a paradoxically beneficent role since 1945, but no matter. Nineteen programmed psychotics can still inflict 3,000 deaths. Not much earlier, it took just two lunatics to kill 166 in Oklahoma City. The line on the graph still seems to end in the world of *Dr. Strangelove*, where the only thing required to end everything is one man's madness.

Forgive me my fears, my pettifogging. But it's cold in here, and I find too little comfort in echoes of Ike and Reagan, in an effort to isolate problems of enormous scope and complexity in specific countries. Teeing off on these quaint, hellish little regimes may not stave off the unimaginable and may even hasten its onset. What worries me worst, when the icy blast from the register really gets cranking, is not just that Bush and Cheney and Powell seem a bit stuck in the past, but that it may be the wrong past. In their sober, laconic, can-do, who's-next approach to global terror, they seem, at worst, to have gone all the way back to Clausewitz's mad dictum that war is only "the pursuit of policy by other means." That, of course, is exactly what war is not: a comprehensible process, a tool that can be rationally applied, a means to foreseeable ends, or anything but a last resort. Do they understand this? Have they remembered how often splendid little wars have been prologue to ghastly debacles? Do they know the devil they are dancing with?

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FILM

Reclaiming the American Story

by Clyde Wilson

Gods and Generals

Produced and Directed by Ronald F. Maxwell
Screenplay by Ronald F. Maxwell from Jeff Shaara's book
Released by Warner Bros.

The war of 1861-65 is still the pivotal event of American history, despite all that has passed since. In the extent of mobilization, casualties, and material destruction on American soil, in the number of world-class events and personalities, and in revolutionary consequences, nothing else can equal it.

That is why Ronald F. Maxwell's epic portrayal of the first two years of the conflict, a prequel to his 1993 *Gettysburg*, is more than just another film or a good recreation of history. It is an American cultural event of major significance.

The cataclysmic bloodletting of the war left a gaping hole in the American psyche. Late in the 19th century, we began to achieve a kind of healing by rendering the tragedy as a common ordeal of North and South. The Great Reconciliation went something like this: The victorious North agreed to stop demonizing Southerners as an inexplicably and irredeemably evil people, to recognize the courage and sincerity of their effort at independence, and to adopt the Confederacy's heroes, such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, as American heroes.

This had been anticipated by Joshua Chamberlain's respectful salute to the defeated at Appomattox. His sentiment was shared by most fighting Union soldiers, though not by their political superiors and ideological masters. (Ambrose Bierce and other combat veterans said they never met an abolitionist in the Union Army.) Because of deliberately whipped-up political hysteria, it was not until late in the century that much of the Northern public overcame their Southern-devil idea of the war.

In return for respect finally granted, Southerners agreed to be thankful that the country had not been broken up and to be the most loyal of Americans in the future. In other words, the war, instead of being a morality play of the triumph of virtue over evil, was accepted as having had good and bad on both sides and as a necessary trauma out of which had arisen a new, more united, and more powerful nation. This is why Southerner D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, with its sympathetic recounting of Southern experience coupled with an admiring portrayal of Lincoln, was a great success.

The Great Reconciliation prevailed for half a century. *Gone With the Wind* was immensely popular. The Confederate Battle Flag was carried by American fighting men to the corners of the earth in World War II (which today would subject them to security investigation and court-martial). Harry S. Truman chose a romantic portrait of Jackson and Lee for the lobby of his presidential library, and Dwight D. Eisenhower and Winston Churchill chose Southern expert Douglas Southall Freeman to show them around the field of Gettysburg. That *Gods and Generals* has Stonewall Jackson as its central character would have been considered, not too many years ago, as American as apple pie. Today, it is a feat of insight and courage. What Max-

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well has done in this stunningly crafted and epically expansive recreation of the first two years of the war is nothing less than to restore American history to the Americans.

Although Southerners have kept and continue to keep their part of the bargain, the truce was broken around 30 years ago, and the Southern-devil theory re-emerged—and has been gathering force ever since. The average historian's explanation is that Americans have achieved a new realization of their heinous history regarding African-Americans and can never go back to the callous views of previous generations. This rests on the unquestioned assumption that the African-American experience—or, rather, the current interpretation of it—is the central or even the only important experience of American history.

The real explanation for the revival of Southern demonization as a national pastime is actually more complicated and has nothing to do with the discoveries of "expert" academic historians. It reflects, first of all, the triumph of Cultural Marxism—of history at the service of a fanatical agenda. The mainstream academic interpretation of the Civil War—and of much else in the American past—that prevails today institutionalizes views that, 50 years ago, were current nowhere except in the communist neighborhoods of New York City. Our history has been rewritten under the rubrics of Race, Class, and "Gender."

The worst thing about this is not, as countless neoconservative publicists have wailed, that it makes for divisive politics. The worst thing about it is that it cuts us off from our history, rendering our forebears alien and dead abstractions.

With regard to the Civil War, there is another element of distortion that relates not to leftist politics so much as to the penchant of too many Americans to assume their own unique righteousness, which has been a problem ever since the first Puritans stepped ashore at Boston. If Sherman burning his way through Georgia and Carolina was a righteous exercise against evil, then obviously the bombing of Christian Serbs and the starving of Iraqi children reflects the same unsullliable mission of American triumph.

The classic illustration of this is Ken Burns' celebrated documentary on the Civil War. Surrounding his thesis with intrinsically attractive materials, Burns revived the portrayal of the war as a morality play in a way that was widely appealing. In Burns' interpretation, the war was about the benevolence of the Union and emancipation and the evils of treason and slavery. At bottom, this rests upon a convenient fantasy—the fantasy of Northern racial benevolence. It is child's play to demonstrate that such benevolence never existed before, during, or after the war. This historical fabrication—that a war of conquest was gloriously, unselfishly benevolent—remains a seemingly ineradicable foundation of the American *amour-propre*.

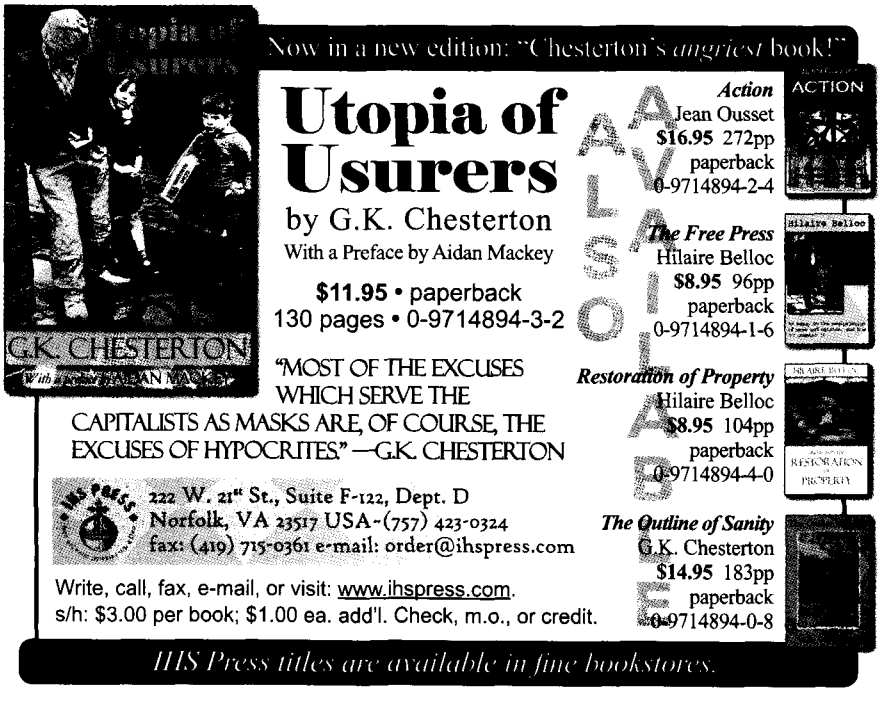
By contrast, Maxwell has largely given us a dramatization of Americans, including African-Americans, as the real people in the real context in which they loved, perspired, wept, struggled, suffered, and died. That context truly was epic and, like all great historical events, morally complex. I could go on at length about the many marvelous aspects of Maxwell's creation: the battles, the well-drawn characters from history, the recognition of the importance of Christianity in the lives of our forebears, and much else. Though based generally on Jeff Shaara's novel of the same name, *Gods and Generals* follows the book less closely than *Gettysburg* did *The Killer Angels*, which is all to the good.

There can be no perfection on this earth, which brings me to the one small flaw in this dazzling gem. Southerners, generally—and, for all I know, Civil War students, too—found fault with Martin Sheen's portrayal of Lee in *Gettysburg*. I thought the condemnation excessive; Sheen did a good job, given the impossibility of recreating Lee in a world where not even a model remains. Many happily greeted the news that Robert Duvall would portray Lee in *Gods and Generals*.

Now, I am risking being ridden out of town on a rail for this, but I would rather have Sheen or, even better, an unknown performer as Lee. Duvall is a fine actor who has portrayed many Southerners with verisimilitude. As Lee, he is a failure. At the beginning of the war, Lee was a vigorous, late-middle-aged man with an audacious military genius lurking just below a placid surface. Duvall plays Lee from the start as a worn-out old man—as Lee must have been after Appomattox—and with an overdone Deep South, rather than a Virginian, accent.

I was privileged to view a pre-release screening of *Gods and Generals*. It was way past my bedtime and a hundred miles from home, but I kept hoping the screen would never go blank. The film, I understand, has been cut considerably for theatrical release. I deliciously anticipate both the complete six-hour version that is to be released on DVD and the final installment of Maxwell's trilogy, *The Last Full Measure*, which is already in production. *Gods and Generals* is an arresting example of how a people's history should be told—which ought to have a healthy effect on Americans' idea of themselves.

Clyde Wilson is a descendant of Confederate privates on both sides.



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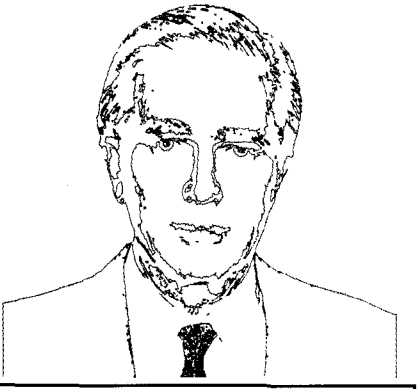
by George McCartney

The Sorrows of Solipsism



Solaris

Produced by James Cameron and 20th Century Fox
Directed by Steven Soderbergh
Screenplay by Steven Soderbergh from Stanislaw Lem's novel
Distributed by 20th Century Fox

Adaptation

Produced by Propaganda Films
Directed by Spike Jonze
Screenplay by Charlie Kaufman and Donald Kaufman from The Orchid Thief *by Susan Orlean*
Distributed by Columbia Pictures

Steven Soderbergh's *Solaris* is the first film I have seen in decades that portrays the terrifying consequences of abortion. For this, Soderbergh deserves congratulations, although I am not sure why he has dragged us into space to sound the alarm. Perhaps it is too dangerous a thought to share on Earth these days.

Solaris is an adaptation of an adaptation. Soderbergh has taken Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky's 1972 film of the same title, which was itself an adaptation of a 1961 novel by Polish science-fiction writer Stanislaw Lem. Soderbergh seems to have used Tarkovsky's film as his template and then cut its 169-minute metaphysical rumination to a 110-minute romance, rendering his *Solaris* an austere, cryptic meditation on love, its challenges and delusions. While beautifully shot and often moving, it is ultimately too elliptical for its own good. Although Soderbergh's love story has its basis in the novel, Lem's interests were much wider. Lem's novel of ideas considers the nearly hopeless self-infatuation of our species. Tarkovsky's film is a far-truer rendering of the text and, despite technical limitations, is, in some ways, more visually accomplished. Soderbergh's version, on the other hand, can boast of its darkly intense color schemes and relentless close-ups that work effectively to pull us inside the characters' torment.

The new *Solaris* opens with psychologist Chris Kelvin waking from a troubled dream in which he hears a woman's voice saying, "I love you so much; don't you love me, Chris?" Upon rising, he stares morosely out his apartment's rain-spattered window. We can tell that he's inconsolable, because he is equipped with George Clooney's soulful eyes. He is still mourning his wife, Rheya (Natascha McElhone), who committed suicide years before. He had walked out on her after discovering that she had aborted their child for fear that the baby might inherit the madness that ran in her family. Falling into despair, she took her life, leaving him guilt-ridden.

When we first meet Kelvin in this future age, he is working as a psychologist specializing in grief management. The officials at Earth's space administration want to send him to the space station that revolves around the distant planet of Solaris. For reasons unknown, the crew has become distraught. A security detail had been sent out some time ago, but it was never heard from again. Logically, there is no other recourse but to send a lone psychologist to solve the mystery. (It is comforting to learn psychologists will be so competent in the future.)

The trouble on the station stems from Solaris itself. It seems the oceanic planet is actually a thinking organism that has been tampering with the crew's minds. It has the power to rifle their memories, ferreting out their repressed thoughts and guilty secrets. It specializes in recreating betrayed loved ones. Thus, the first night aboard, Kelvin awakens to find Rheya sleeping next to him. At first unnerved, he realizes that she must be an alien manifestation, even though everything about her seems genuine, especially her feelings for him. She has no memory of the original Rheya's suicide and wants nothing more than to be his loving wife. Finally, not knowing what else to do, he persuades her to get into a small space shuttle and then jettisons her from the station. Kelvin turns to watch her contorted face silently screaming at him through the shuttle's porthole as she sails into frigid space. It is a deeply troubling scene—meant, I believe, to echo Rheya's abortion. It certainly feels like a cold, deliberate rejection of life. From this point, the narrative becomes even more bizarre in ways better left unsaid here.

As does Lem's novel, the film raises some difficult, if traditional, questions. Do we really know the people we care for? When we fall in love, do we devote ourselves to our partner on her own terms, or are we too solipsistic to go beyond our projection of what we want her to be? (The planet's name is not idly chosen.) These are fine questions to raise, but, unlike the novel and Tarkovsky's film, Soderbergh has decided not to go beyond them. For Lem, Kelvin's manufactured Rheya was just one more instance of our solipsism. As another character puts it, the astronauts are converting space itself into a mirror of their expectations. Leaving this out, Soderbergh also leaves out most of Lem's metaphysical meditation on our species' place in the universe. While philosophical speculation is not the most cinematic of subjects, it is, nevertheless, what gives the earlier works their heft. By comparison, Soderbergh's film seems thin. It resembles a slightly more sophisticated remake of *Between Two Worlds* (1944), in which John Garfield, Eleanor Parker, and Sydney Greenstreet found themselves unaccountably aboard a ship making calls at otherworldly ports, such as Heaven and Hell.

Solipsism is also at issue in *Adaptation*, the second movie by director Spike Jonze (*née* Steven Spiegle) and writer Charlie Kaufman, after achieving success with *Being John Malkovich*.

Watching *Adaptation*, I was reminded of Helen Vendler's caution regarding Yale's literary champ, Harold Bloom. Exasperated by Bloom's tireless self-promotion, she declared that he gave brilliance a bad name. Substitute *cleverness* for *brilliance*, and Vendler's jibe applies with equal warrant to Kaufman and Jonze. These two are endlessly clever in their

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determination to make themselves look at least as brilliant as Bloom. Their film even contains a Bloomian sneer at the school of deconstruction.

This is not to say that *Adaptation* is not worth seeing. It is very funny, the performances are exceptional, and, in its own twisted way, it raises some important issues. Nevertheless, as the credits crawled, I was left with a sour aftertaste. This film is too self-regarding and too manipulative to be wholly satisfying—unless, of course, you are a postmodernist. If you are convinced that the subject of art is not the external world but the self and its manifold delusions about what lurks outside its mental precincts, this is your movie.

The premise is this: Coming off his surprise *Malkovich* hit, Kaufman (played by Nicholas Cage) is hired by a Hollywood studio to adapt *The Orchid Thief*, by *New Yorker* staff writer Susan Orlean (Meryl Streep). (Of course, they want him to spark this horticultural study with a little sex and violence lamentably missing from its pages.) When he finds himself neurotically stymied by the project, he takes to writing a script about himself trying to write the script, which then becomes the movie we are watching.

Orlean's book began as a long *New Yorker* article focused on a quirky, self-taught Florida horticulturist named John Laroche (superbly played by Chris Cooper). To all appearances, Laroche is a lost soul. With his missing front teeth, his bedraggled hair hanging below his greasy baseball cap, and his penchant for telling people, "I'm the smartest person I know," he seems more than eccentric—he could be dangerous. When Orlean first meets him, he goes into a well-practiced spiel about orchids and his harvesting of them from the state preserve, despite their endangered-species status. He has been sending Seminole tribesmen in to poach the orchids. This, he contends, is quite legal, because the Indians are exempt from the environmental regulations that hamper white interlopers. (The scene in which Laroche eloquently explains this to a perplexed park ranger is worth at least half the admission price.) Besides, Laroche continues, he should be hailed an environmental hero. After all, his purpose is to grow tens of thousands of these orchids, thus rendering them unendangered. At first, Orlean thinks he is suffering from delusions of grandeur; the more she learns, however, the more Laroche's ramblings seem plausible.

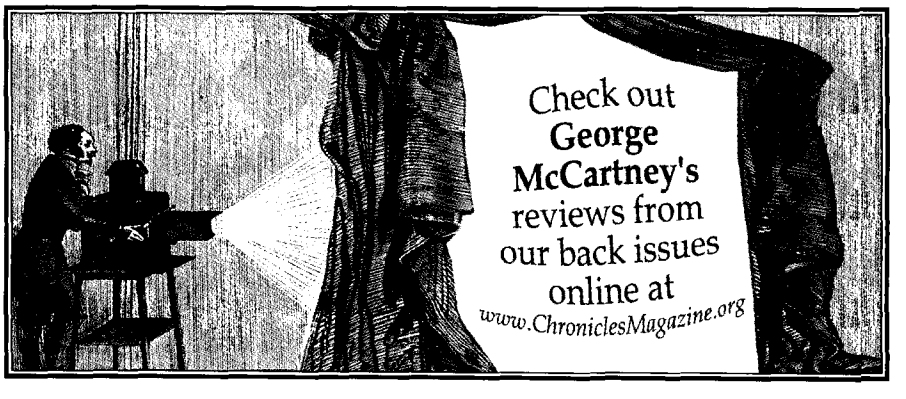
Fascinated by Laroche's passion for orchids, Orlean makes him her portal into the hothouse world of these prized flowers, their evolution, and their economics. Picking up Laroche's musings, she writes of the orchid's evolutionary intelligence. In the different regions in which it thrives, it has adapted itself by taking on the appearance of the local insects, thus drawing them to itself so they will pick up and disperse its seeds. It could even be said that orchids have developed their strange beauty to seduce humans into housing and breeding them.

Orlean finds Laroche's passion captivating, ruefully reflecting that she has never experienced anything like it. In her Upper Westside *milieu*, she and her colleagues are too sophisticated to surrender to full, overmastering enthusiasms. Almost on principle, they see the world through a filter of bemused irony. With Laroche as her guide, Orlean concludes that her circle's knowing detachment is emotionally crippling. After hearing Laroche say, "When you find your flower, you have to go for it," she writes—and Kaufman quotes her in his script twice—"I suppose I have one unembarrassed passion. I want to find something to feel passionate about." It is a would-be intellectual's *cri de coeur*, however muted. (Notice her "suppose." Even her revelation is couched in the commitment-phobic subjunctive.) After this, her book becomes as much a self-exploration as an investigation into orchids. It's also more than a little self-indulgent, and this is Kaufman's cue.

We watch the sweating Kaufman reading and rereading Orlean's book, as he sinks hopelessly into her musings. He is stuck as surely as if he were sunk up to his eyeballs in the Fakahatchee swamp where Orlean did much of her research. He cannot deal with this "sprawling *New Yorker* s--t," as he calls it. Finally, he seizes on the one thing that resonates with him—Orlean's self-indulgence—and decides to turn his screenplay into a study of himself. Excitedly, he snatches his handheld tape recorder and dictates: "We open with Charles Kaufman, fat, balding, ugly, repulsive," but soon stops short. "I've written myself into my own screenplay," he sobs. "It's solipsistic, pathetic, self-indulgent. I'm a loser." This is the standard Woody Allen ploy: Disarm criticism by first confessing your neurosis and then mocking it. We are supposed to laugh. While the conceit is funny up to a point, this self-flagellating *shtick* soon becomes tedious.

To make things worse for Kaufman, his dimwitted twin, Donald, shows up at his dingy L.A. apartment, asking for lodging. (Kaufman's dark, crummy living quarters seem devised to discourage aspiring screenwriters. After a career in television and film, including writing the successful *Malkovich*, is this all he's got?) Donald wants advice on how to write a screenplay about a serial killer who has kidnapped a young woman and the police investigator who falls in love with the hostage, sight unseen. In no time at all, he has set up shop and is typing faster than his cliché-ridden mind can think. Meanwhile, Charlie stews in the next room, hunched over a page unsullied by type. (Since Kaufman does not have a twin, we can take Donald to be the ebullient Hyde lurking within his hand-wringing Jekyll.) Guess who sells his script to the studio first—and for seven figures?

Soon, Charlie has no choice. Like the orchids, he must adapt or perish. His script abruptly mutates from the story of his writer's block to a Donaldesque thriller, in which he enters directly into Orlean's world. There, he encounters all the sex and violence that the studio had been urging him to include in the first place. As Charlie says, his story has become a snake swallowing its own tail—or is that tale? Clever, yes. But brilliant? The call is yours.



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by Srdja Trifkovic

Middle East Resources

The minefield of Middle Eastern myths, passions, and deceit is so dense that even making a factual statement may open you to accusations of bias and mendacity. It would take an entire issue of *Chronicles* just to provide a comprehensive bibliography and a list of the websites relevant to the Middle East. However, the non-idiot might begin with Walter Laquer's *The Israel-Arab Reader* (Penguin, 1995), a clear, readable reference work full of documentary sources. For an eloquent analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, coupled with a careful argument for America's "constructive disengagement," proceed to Leon Hadar's *Quagmire: America in the Middle East* (Cato, 1993).

For contrasting Zionist and Palestinian accounts, try Howard Sachar's *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1998) and Edward Said's *The Politics of Dispossession* (Random House, 1994). You will notice how the grinding of different axes translates into differences of rhetoric, emphasis, and intent. You will need to learn how to recognize these in other authors as you continue.

Thanks to the internet, many documents, rare books, and other primary texts are now available to the nonspecialist. To study the ancient history of the region, visit the *Electronic Tools and Ancient Near Eastern Archives* (*www.etana.org*), a treasure trove of books that are currently out of print.

Turning to modern times, the Avalon Project at Yale Law School (*www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/mideast.htm*) offers a collection of documents from 1916 to the present, including many primary sources unavailable in electronic format elsewhere.

As history becomes current affairs, the minefield of partisanship becomes more treacherous. As *www.mideastweb.org*, dedicated to Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation, warns visitors, "you are advised not to take anything at face value" among the many sources of information that are designed to boost circulation and present a viewpoint, not to inform.

On the Arab side, the sources are, not surprisingly, fewer and less diverse. Worth bookmarking is *www.arab.net*, predictably discriminating in its selection of material to reflect the fact that it is "owned by ArabNet Technology (ANT), part of the Saudi Research and Marketing Group, publisher of the leading newspapers and magazines in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." The site has special features on 22 countries and a daily selection of current-affairs articles and commentary from around the world.

Using ostensibly neutral research institutions as vehicles for political advocacy is fairly common in Washington, and the Middle East Institute (*www.mideasti.org*) provides an excellent example. It is a sophisticated pro-Arab lobbying organization in the guise of a think tank. Its useful links will take you to dozens of sites all over the region. The Institute's quarterly, the *Middle East Journal*, has articles by scholars, foreign-policy analysts, and area experts sympathetic to the Arab cause.

Lower on the scale of sophistication, the Foundation for Middle East Peace (*www.fmep.org*) publishes a bimonthly *Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories*.

In the middle ground, there is Harvard's and PBS's joint Global Connections site focused on the Middle East (*www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/mideast*), which integrates public-broadcasting resources "to provide a global and historical perspective that will help teachers, students, and the general public explore and understand seminal events of national and international significance." The site stores much useful material with a heavy p.c. slant (*e.g.*, "Three Religions—One God").

For the more academically minded, I recommend the Middle East Network Information Center (*menic.utexas.edu/menic*), a public service of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

On the pro-Israeli side, the field is more crowded with lobbying and propaganda groups that project an academic front. We are thus told that, "Founded in 1985, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy [*www.washingtoninstitute.org*] is a public educational foundation dedicated to scholarly research and informed debate on U.S. interests in the Middle East." Yet the group, led by Dennis Ross, seems interested in "U.S. interests" only if they reflect those of Israel.

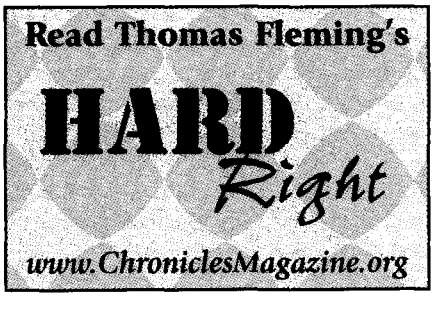
The Washington-based Middle East Media Research Institute (*www.memri.org*) explores the region's media and thus

> bridges the language gap which exists between the West and the Middle East, providing timely translations of Arabic, Farsi, and Hebrew media, as well as original analysis of political, ideological, intellectual, social, cultural, and religious trends in the Middle East.

It has a huge and constantly updated pool of translated articles, but its slant is evident both in the selection of materials and in the fact that it has been praised as "the single most important resource for understanding what is happening in the Middle East today" by Charles Krauthammer, "an invaluable research service" by Thomas Friedman, and "the most important research source for the Arab world of which I know" by Martin Peretz.

DEBKA*file* (*www.debka.org*) is an Israeli electronic news publication, a news and analysis live wire that relies heavily on Israeli intelligence sources. It is a "must read" for Middle East junkies, though it should be consumed *cum granum salis*.

The same warning applies to most of the sources you will encounter in your research. Information is plentiful but seldom "objective," and it is often calculated to mislead. You will need to study the original sources—not summaries prepared by Beltway lobbyists parading as analysts—and interpret them in context. No need to hurry: The problem will be with us for many, many years to come. ‹C›



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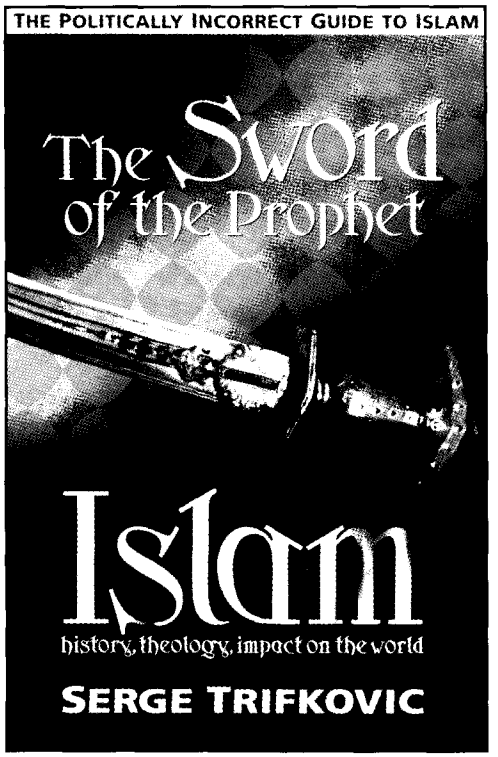
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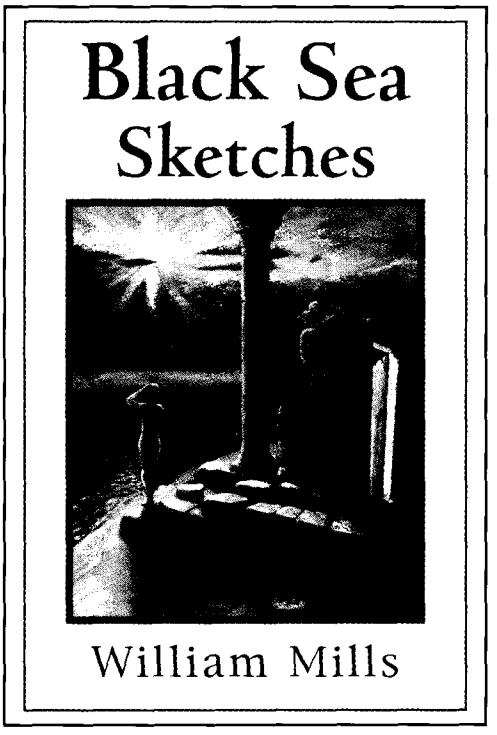
Black Sea Sketches

BLACK SEA SKETCHES is a travel book written for serious travelers, including armchair travelers. Although the author may take an occasional swim or walk the beaches, the book is much more about the history and prehistory, the culture and the contemporary scene than about recreational opportunities. It is the kind of book you would want to read before or during your own travel in these fascinating countries.

The five countries—Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Georgia—often share military and economic history, but cultural contrasts abound: different alphabets and languages, different religions. While most of Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Georgia embrace the Orthodox faith, Turkey is largely Muslim, as is part of the Crimean population. All five of the countries reflect, especially architecturally, the common past of ancient Greece and, most of them, of the later Genoan commercial empire.



Rising above the glittering monuments of the past, however, are the people Mills met and the stories of their lives, often of great courage under pressure and of generosity to a stranger and a traveler.

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